

Thesis/  
Reports

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**Report on Navigability, Title, and Historic Uses  
of Redfish Lake**

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# **Report on Navigability, Title, and Historic Uses of Redfish Lake**

Prepared for  
**US Forest Service, Region 4**  
**Ogden, Utah**  
Under contract

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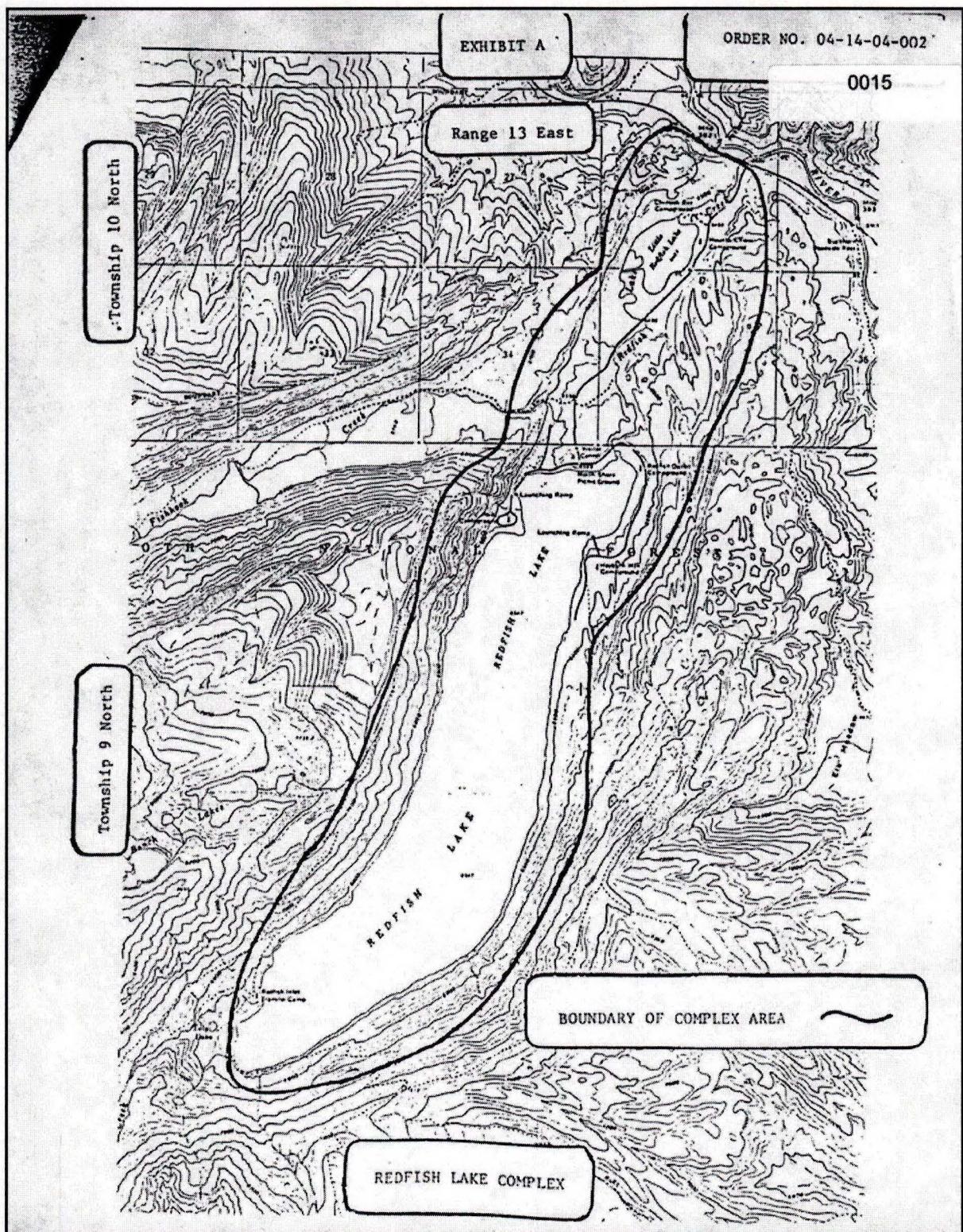
## 1. INTRODUCTION

Redfish Lake, a five-mile-long glacier waterbody, is situated in the Stanley Basin of southcentral Idaho at an elevation of approximately 6500 feet. Surrounded by the majestic Sawtooth Mountains, the lake has provided recreational and economic opportunities in Idaho since the late nineteenth century. Although the historical record is unclear about exactly when the first European Americans encountered Redfish Lake, it had become a noted spot for camping and fishing by the 1880s. This fame grew throughout the 1900s, spurred on by the lake's placement in the Sawtooth National Forest in the early 1900s and the construction of Redfish Lake Lodge in the 1920s. As America's tourist industry boomed after the Second World War, visitation increased, making the lake one of the forest's most popular attractions, especially after its inclusion in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in 1972. As more and more people used the lake in the late twentieth century, questions arose over who had title to the bed and banks of the waterway, and whether the State of Idaho or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service was the proper permitting agency for construction and activities on the lake. Disagreement about ownership of and jurisdiction over the bed and banks of Redfish Lake has reached the point of litigation between the claimant agencies. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Forest Service for use in that litigation.

This report is divided into two parts. The first is the history of navigability on the lake and of the different uses of its bed and banks. The historical record is divided into three segments: before 1890, 1891 to 1945, and 1946 to the present. This historical overview is followed by a discussion of correspondence between the Forest Service and the State of Idaho regarding navigability and ownership of Redfish Lake. References are provided in footnote form and indexed copies of the documents will be attached to the final version of this report.

### 1.1 HISTORY OF REDFISH LAKE TO 1890

Located in Custer County about six miles south of Stanley, Idaho, in Township 9 North, Range 13 East, of the Boise Meridian, Redfish Lake stretches five miles from north to south, and one mile from east to west. Two inlets feed the lake: the first, known as Redfish Lake Creek, runs into the lake from the southwest, tumbling over steep falls a mile outside of the lake; the second, called Fishhook Creek, flows from the northwest. On the northeastern side of the lake, Redfish

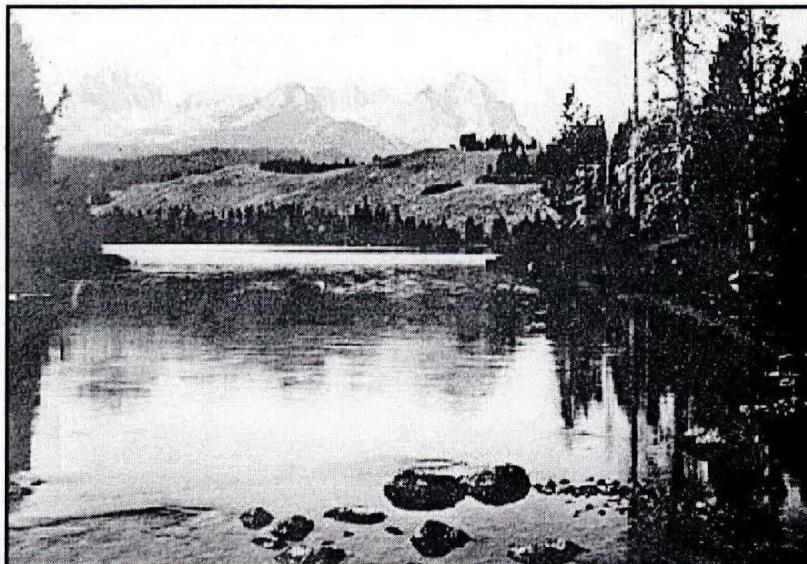


**Figure 1.** The Redfish Lake Recreation Complex, showing Redfish and Little Redfish Lakes and its inlets and outlets. *Source:* File SNRA Legislation, Acts, Orders, Etc., Yellow Sawtooth NRA History Filing Cabinet, Sawtooth National Recreation Area Office, Ketchum, Idaho.



**Figure 2.** Redfish Lake Creek. *Source:* F 05805, Photograph Filing Cabinet, Regional History Department [RHD], Ketchum Community Library, Ketchum, Idaho [KCL].

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**Figure 3.** Little Redfish Lake, ca. 1900. *Source:* F 06097, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.

Lake Creek emerges, functioning as an outlet that connects the waterway with Little Redfish Lake, a smaller body of water directly north (Figures 1, 2, and 3).<sup>1</sup> Together with Alturas, Pettit, Yellow Belly, and Stanley Lakes, Redfish and Little Redfish comprise the headwaters of the Salmon River. Both were named for the sockeye salmon that come from the Columbia River via the Salmon River to spawn in the lakes.

Archeological excavations indicate that Paleo-Indians used an overhang rock shelter at Redfish Lake around 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, probably for fishing purposes. By the 1800s, Indians of the Tukudeka Shoshone, whose name means “Sheepeaters,” summered in the Stanley Basin to hunt and gather various foods, including salmon, meaning that they were in the area when the first white explorers examined the region.<sup>2</sup> This exploration began in 1824 when Alexander Ross, a member of the Hudson's Bay Company, led a Snake Country Expedition on a search for beaver in the Sawtooth Mountains. In September 1824 Ross's party entered the Stanley Basin and camped near Gold Creek, only a few miles east of Redfish Lake. But Ross never mentioned or described the waterbody in his diaries, indicating that the expedition either never reached Redfish or did not find the lake significant enough to mention.<sup>3</sup> In 1831, Warren Ferris and several other American Fur Company trappers pushed into the eastern portions of the Sawtooth Valley, but this group's records also never referred specifically to Redfish Lake.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, explorers such as John Work of the Hudson's Bay Company and Captain Benjamin L. E.

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<sup>1</sup> I. A. Rodeheffer, “A Survey of the Waters of the Sawtooth National Forest, Idaho,” May 1935, p. 9, Unlabeled File, Unlabeled Filing Cabinet, Sawtooth National Forest Office (SNFO), Twin Falls, Idaho, Document No. 0032; R. H. Rutledge, “Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests,” pp. 8-9, File Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Section of Sawtooth, Challis and Boise National Forests 1923, Yellow (Sawtooth NRA History) Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0019.

<sup>2</sup> Clark T. Heglar, *Redfish Lake Lodge: A Look at the Early History of Redfish Lake Lodge* (Star, Idaho: Porchswing Productions, 2001), n.p., Document No. 0150; Victor O. Goodwin and John A. Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study, Idaho: History* (Ogden, Utah: U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service, 1965), pp. 4-5, Document No. 0052.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Ross, *The Fur Hunters of the Far West*, Kenneth A. Spaulding, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), pp. 278-279; “Route of Alexander Ross south of Ross' Hole, 14 April to 5 November 1824,” p. 11, File Ross, Alexander, Purple (People) Filing Cabinet, Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) Headquarters, Ketchum, Idaho, Document No. 0049.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains: A Diary of Wanderings on the Sources of the Rivers Missouri, Columbia, and Colorado from February, 1830, to November, 1835*, edited by Paul C. Phillips (Denver: The Old West Publishing Company, 1940), pp. 97-102. Redfish Lake is too far west to be the lake that Ferris mentions on p. 98.

Bonneville worked in the Sawtooth Valley in 1832 and 1833 without mentioning the lake.<sup>5</sup>

The next major white contact with the Stanley Basin occurred in the 1860s.<sup>6</sup> In 1863, prospectors searching for gold set their sights on the Sawtooth Valley, and in 1864, J. Marion More explored the Sawtooth Mountains for precious metals. Although More had little success, he discovered several high mountain lakes abounding in fish, and he returned to these lakes in 1867 with a small group of fishermen.<sup>7</sup> Because the Sawtooth Mountains contain numerous lakes, it is unclear whether Redfish was one of the waterbodies visited on this journey. Aside from More's group, another expedition reached the Stanley Basin in July 1864, naming the area after its leader, John Stanley. Frank R. Coffin, one of the party's members, recalled nearly 60 years later that the expedition went over the Sawtooth Mountains in an attempt to find the Boise Mines. Although he remembered the view from the summit of the Sawtooths as "the grandest scene ever witnessed anywhere on earth," he did not mention Redfish Lake in his reminiscences.<sup>8</sup> Historians Victor O. Goodwin and John A. Hussey believe that these and other miners "saw the plainly marked silver veins and ledges of the Smiley Creek-Beaver Creek-Alturas Lake area" in 1863 and 1864, but there is no evidence that they traversed the waters of Redfish Lake.<sup>9</sup> However, Esther Yarber and Edna McGown state in their history of the Stanley Basin that "the Indians and trappers, followed by other trappers and prospectors, miners and first settlers, all found [redfish] an excellent source of much needed food."<sup>10</sup> Yarber and McGown supply no evidence for this assertion, but an article in *The Ketchum Keystone* from the 1880s indicated that Redfish Lake had been known "for years." The essay used the testimony of

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<sup>5</sup> William S. Lewis and Paul C. Phillips, eds., *The Journal of John Work* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1923), pp. 151-160; *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville U.S.A. in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West, Digested from His Journal by Washington Irving*, edited and with an introduction by Edgeley W. Todd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 104, 111-112, 116, 136-137, 145, 215-216.

<sup>6</sup> In 1855, soldiers led by Brevet Major Granville O. Haller went through the Stanley Basin on an expedition searching for Indians who had allegedly killed 21 members of a wagon train in August 1854. Their route probably did not take them past Redfish Lake. Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>7</sup> "Site Report—Stanley Basin-Sawtooth Wilderness and Whiteclouds," Idaho State Historical Society Reference Series No. 282, April 1982, p. 5, <http://www.idahohistory.net/Reference%20Series/0282.doc>, Document No. 0507. Unfortunately, the original source discussing More's travels is unknown.

<sup>8</sup> Quotation in "Address of Frank R. Coffin Before the University Club at Boise, Idaho, March 27th, 1920," pp. 16, 18-19, File 1650 Contacts and Other Historical Data Sawtooth National Forest, Unlabeled File Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0036.

<sup>9</sup> Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>10</sup> Esther Yarber, with the assistance of Edna McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1976), p. 76.

“several old trappers and fishermen of that region—men who have camped there for months and months and ought to know”—to support a theory that redfish were native to the lake.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the prospectors' hopes for riches, mining in the Sawtooth Valley did not flourish until the late 1870s when Levi Smiley, E. M. Wilson, and others made discoveries in the Smiley Creek area. These findings led to the establishment of Vienna and Sawtooth City in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and the towns grew as more gold and silver seekers came to the area. Residents of these cities did not merely search for precious metals; they also looked for the best hunting, fishing, and camping spots.<sup>12</sup> Even though Sawtooth City, Vienna, and Wood River mining towns such as Ketchum and Hailey were several miles south of Redfish Lake, the waterway quickly became known for its large population of fish and the beauty of its waters. Mrs. W. H. Broadhead, wife of mining executive Colonel Broadhead, declared as early as 1883 that Redfish Lake, also known as Lake Tahoma, was widely regarded as an excellent place for fishing. Broadhead offered a full description of the lake and the surrounding land, stating that one side was “thickly wooded” with pine, spruce, and fir trees, while the Sawtooth Mountains bordered the other (Figures 4 and 5). Where Redfish Lake Creek ran into the waterway, there were “groves of trees, and open meadow-like spaces, where grass grows luxuriantly, and wild flowers in almost infinite variety live out their brief day.” Broadhead also discussed a wagon road, built in 1880 or 1881, that connected the lake to the Sawtooth and Wood River mining districts, meaning that “large parties from the different Wood River towns” could easily camp and fish at Redfish.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Red Fish,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, July 28, 1888, Document No. 0451.

<sup>12</sup> Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, pp. 55, 62. Little mining activity occurred around Redfish Lake, although a Forest Service report from the 1920s indicated that some prospecting was done on Upper Fishhook Creek. Rutledge, “Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests,” p. 17. An inspection report of Redfish facilities in 1940 indicated that there was a “mineral claims” area around the lake, but did not indicate where it was or when it was entered. “If these revert to the government,” the report declared, “the area should be held for public beach.” A. G. Nord, “Inspection Report, Sawtooth National Forest, September 15 to 21, 1940,” p. 10, File D—Inspection—Sawtooth—1909-1942, Box 932105, RG 95, Accession No. 095-57B-0247, FRC, Document No. 0505. Subsequent research in Bureau of Land Management records has failed to produce any corroborating evidence about these claims.

<sup>13</sup> “Mountain Lake,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 25, 1883, Document No. 0446. This letter is reprinted in Dick d'Easum, *Sawtooth Tales* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1977), pp. 48-52, Document No. 0108. A Forest Service report from the 1920s claimed that this “wagon road” was merely a route that the first travelers had developed “after clearing had been done in a few places. . . . Pole bridges of poor construction were added from year to year by the residents of the county over those creeks where fords were hazardous.” J. A. West, “Location Survey Report: Ketchum-Clayton Project, Red Fish Lake Section, Route No. 26,” p. 3, File E Forest Highways, Idaho, U.S. Highway 93, Sawtooth Park Highway (Ketchum-Clayton, No. 26b) 1926-1930 Sawtooth, Box 932111, RG 95, Accession No. 095-57B-0247, FRC, Document No. 0482.

In the summer of 1882, Broadhead herself visited the lake, skimming the water in one of “two rude bateaulike boats . . . which could be rigged with clumsy sails” (Figure 6). Although she claimed that the boats were available at the lake, she never mentioned who owned them or whether she had to pay for their use. “Already [the lake] is a favorite resort for those who know of its attractions,” she commented, in large part because of the “brilliant red fish that swarms its waters . . . and prove an unfailing source of delight to the numerous visitors” (Figure 7). She foresaw a time when “an ample hotel” would provide accommodations at the lake, but she did not elaborate on whether any tourist operations were already present. Broadhead did mention that a man spent his summers in a cabin at the northern end of the lake trying to keep the area free from debris. She did not explain if he played a role in facilitating recreational opportunities or if he engaged in any commercial activities on the lake, although she revealed that he did not have the financial means to make any improvements on the shore.<sup>14</sup>

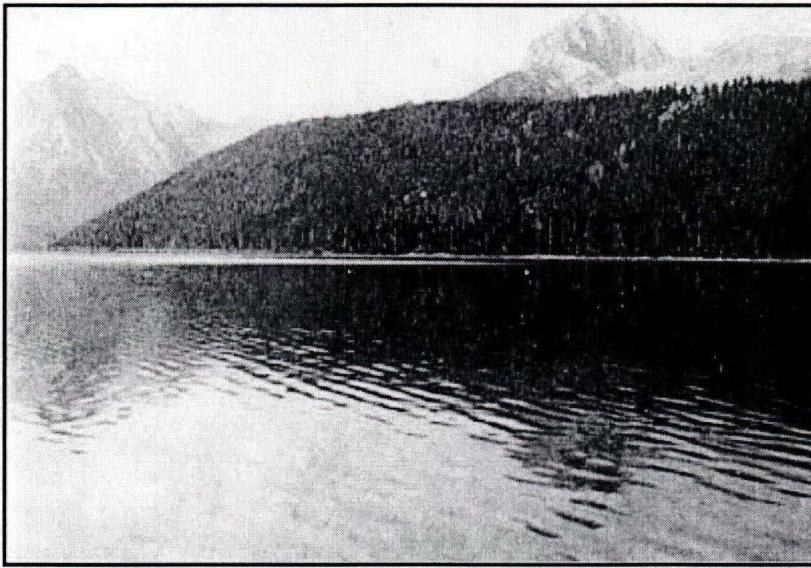
At the same time that Redfish Lake became popular, other units in the Sawtooth Valley, including Alturas Lake, only a few miles south of Redfish, experienced visitation as well. On August 28, 1880, the *Yankee Fork Herald* described Alturas as “8000 feet high, 8 or 9 miles long and has a boat on it, and of course is navigated.”<sup>15</sup> The recreational opportunities at Alturas and Redfish enabled the Union Pacific Railroad to publish a pamphlet in 1881 advertising the wonders of the Sawtooth Mountains, and this pamphlet, coupled with other transportation developments, such as the connection of a railroad spur to Ketchum, increased the fame and popularity of the Sawtooth and its lakes.<sup>16</sup>

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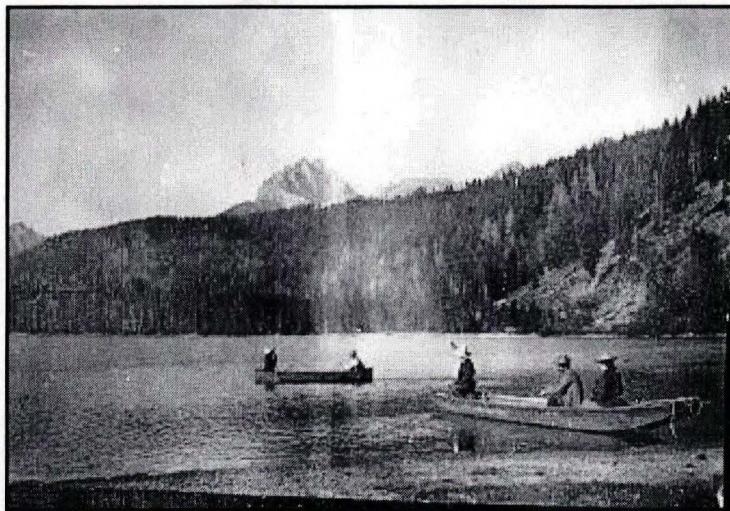
<sup>14</sup> “Mountain Lake,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 25, 1883. Broadhead believed that the man had obtained his land in the mid-1870s.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Art Selin, “A Chronological Listing of Historical Highlights Along and Adjacent to the Upper Main Salmon River, Idaho, Especially Pertaining to Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Vicinity,” p. 12, Unmarked Pamphlet Box, Unlabeled File Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0030. Early reports in the 1880s named Alturas, Redfish, and other lakes in the area the “Redfish lakes” or the “Sawtooth lakes,” with Alturas sometimes called “Big Redfish Lake.” See, for example, “Advantages of Ketchum,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, February 11, 1888, Document No. 0450.

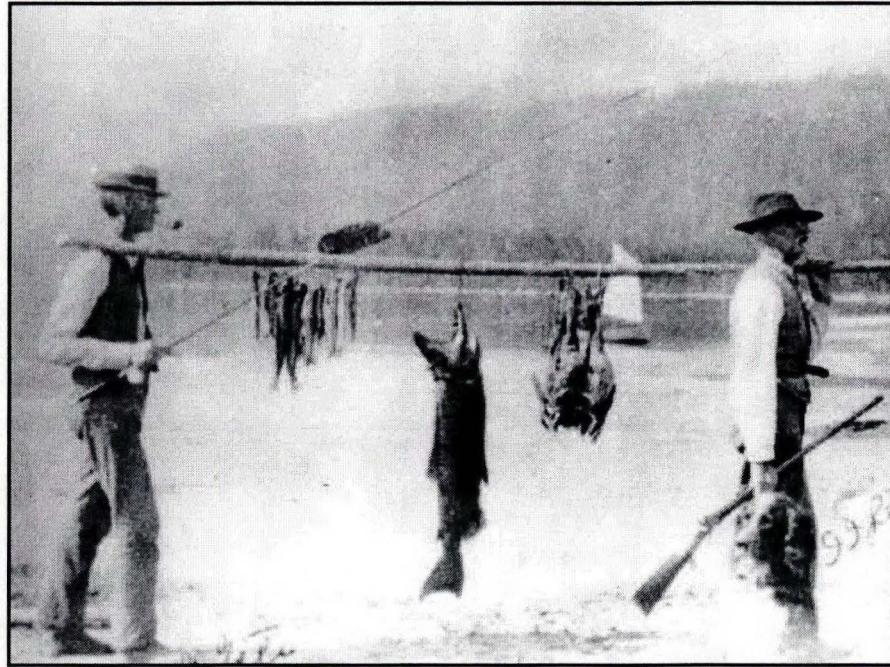
<sup>16</sup> Roshanna Stone and Richa Wilson, “Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1446 (10 CR 1504) Evaluation,” p. 1, copy provided by Richa Wilson, Document No. 0309.



**Figure 4 (top) and Figure 5 (bottom).** Redfish Lake, ca. 1881. *Source:* F 07719, F07720, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.



**Figure 6.** Unidentified canoeists on Redfish Lake, n.d.  
*Source:* F 00769, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.



**Figure 7.** P. G. Gates and I. I. Lewis with sailboat in the background, ca. 1890. *Source:* F 00691, Photograph File Cabinet, RHD, KCL.

According to some accounts, recreation was not the only reason why people were interested in the lake; some also wanted to make money from the abundant supply of fish. A Ketchum newspaper in 1884 stated that redfish from the “Sawtooth lakes” were shipped to Boise from Hailey by rail, while another in 1885 explained that “fine Redfish from the famous Redfish Lake are common at our hotels and restaurants.”<sup>17</sup> Neither of these accounts explained how the fish were caught or who was doing the catching, but Broadhead claimed in her 1883 article that redfish refused to take bait and could only be extricated by spearing.<sup>18</sup> Another essay from 1888 corroborated her statement, claiming that the fish “seldom, if ever, take a hook.” Instead, sportsmen would catch them “with grab hooks especially manufactured for [their] discomfiture.”<sup>19</sup> The articles do not clearly state whether participants fished from boats or from the shoreline, but one account discussed the proficiency of a Mrs. Peters who caught twelve trout “with the rod and line . . . from off a small raft anchored in the lake.”<sup>20</sup> Reports as late as the 1920s still indicated that spearing or netting were the best ways to catch redfish.<sup>21</sup>

However the fish were extracted, a few publications in the 1890s indicated that fishermen were harvesting spawning sockeye from Stanley Basin lakes. One claimed that an entrepreneur in 1881 took 2,600 pounds of fresh sockeye from Alturas Lake for miners in Atlanta and Rocky Bar.<sup>22</sup> During the same decade, another man tried to develop a fish trap and cannery at Redfish Lake, proposing to sell the fish he caught to miners in Sawtooth City, Vienna, Rocky Bar, and Atlanta. He even built Pioneer Road to facilitate this development. According to a Forest Service brochure, Idaho became a state and passed a law prohibiting fish trapping before he

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<sup>17</sup> *Idaho Weekly Keystone*, August 16, 1884, Document No. 0444; *Idaho Semi-Weekly Keystone*, August 8, 1885, Document No. 0443.

<sup>18</sup> “Mountain Lakes,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 25, 1883.

<sup>19</sup> “Red Fish,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, July 28, 1888.

<sup>20</sup> “Wayside Notes,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, August 18, 1888, Document No. 0452. The essay does not say whether Peters sold the fish.

<sup>21</sup> “Preliminary Investigation, Stanley and Clayton Sections, Ketchum-Clayton Road, Idaho, Sawtooth and Challis National Forests, Blaine and Custer Counties,” p. 25, File E Roads and Trails, Idaho—U.S. Highway 93, Sawtooth Park Highway (Ketchum-Clayton, Sec. No. 26b) 1922-1925 Sawtooth, Box 932111, RG 95, Accession No. 095-57B-0247, FRC, Document No. 0477.

<sup>22</sup> Barton W. Evermann, “A Preliminary Report Upon Salmon Investigations in Idaho in 1894,” *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* 15 (1895): p. 277, Document No. 0508.

could implement his plans, forcing him to abandon the venture.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Frank C. Parks, a Sawtooth postmaster who had an interest in the fish populations of the Sawtooth, met a Mr. Springer, “a fisherman and hunter,” who was catching fish in Alturas and the Salmon River in 1896 and selling them to Custer residents. Unfortunately, Parks did not clearly state whether Springer fished in Redfish Lake for that purpose as well.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, a series of U.S. Fish Commission publications describing the fish in the headwaters of the Salmon River in the 1890s focused mainly on Alturas Lake, indicating that at the time, Alturas was fished more frequently than Redfish.<sup>25</sup>

Yet Redfish Lake clearly had become well known to Sawtooth residents by 1890. One Ketchum newspaper reported in 1884 that people from Sawtooth City went to Redfish Lake for a Fourth of July picnic,<sup>26</sup> while an essay in February 1888 explained that a “good wagon road” connected the body to the Wood River area.<sup>27</sup> One of the preferred activities for residents in the Sawtooth and Wood River valleys was to go to Redfish and Alturas Lakes when the salmon were spawning. According to one account, the spawning season usually began around July 25 and lasted through August. At that time, an “annual string of excursionists” went through the Wood River Valley and over the Sawtooth Mountains to Alturas and Redfish Lakes (Figure 8). After arriving, most of the participants spent their time “fishing for the gamey red-fish” in a “sport or pleasure more than ordinarily recreative and attractive.”<sup>28</sup> As an August 1887 article concluded, “the rush to the Redfish Lakes has commenced and the visitors to these favorite resorts in the Sawtooth range

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<sup>23</sup> U.S. Forest Service, Sawtooth National Forest, *Fishhook Creek Nature Trail* (Ogden, Utah: U.S. Forest Service, n.d.), n.p., copy in Folder Sawtooth R4-1680-95-0079-9, USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region (IRO) Office, Ogden, Utah, Document No. 0054. The pamphlet, which does not provide the name of the man, lists the 1890s as the date of this venture, but it was probably in the 1880s. For one thing, the Idaho Territorial Legislature first passed laws in the 1880s prohibiting the trapping of fish. See, for example, “An Act Relating to the Killing of Game and Catching of Fish,” *Idaho Weekly Keystone*, July 19, 1884, Document No. 0445. In addition, Sawtooth City and Vienna were largely abandoned by the 1890s. For another reference to this venture, see Evermann, “A Preliminary Report Upon Salmon Investigations in Idaho in 1894,” p. 277.

<sup>24</sup> F. C. Parks, “Notes on the Redfish and Chinook Salmon at Alturas Lake, Idaho,” 1896, p. 8, attachment to State of Idaho, “Redfish Lake: Historical Uses,” document provided to the author by Richa Wilson, Document No. 0347.

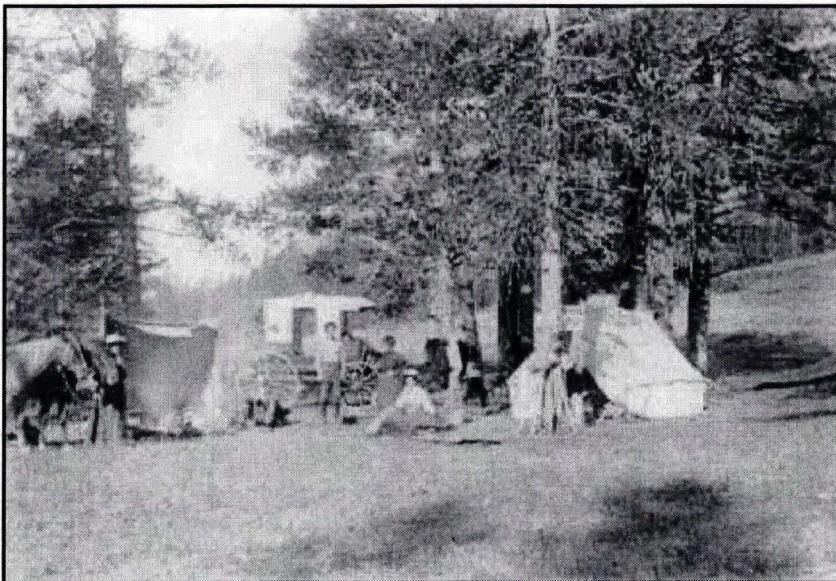
<sup>25</sup> An 1896 publication, for example, devoted five pages to Alturas Lake and only one-and-a-half pages to Redfish. Barton Warren Evermann, *A Report upon Salmon Investigations in the Headwaters of the Columbia River, in the State of Idaho, in 1895; Together with Notes upon the Fishes Observed in that State in 1894 and 1895* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 155-160, 164-166. Alturas Lake was probably more popular in the 1880s and 1890s because it was more accessible than Redfish, being closer to Ketchum and other towns.

<sup>26</sup> *Idaho Weekly Keystone*, July 12, 1884, Document No. 0442.

<sup>27</sup> “Advantages of Ketchum,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, February 11, 1888.

<sup>28</sup> “Red Fish,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, July 28, 1888.

will be greater this month than ever before.”<sup>29</sup> In 1888, several people sent letters to *The Ketchum Keystone* relating their experiences at these salmon runs. One talked about “spearing red fish, which we found to be plentiful at the head of one of the small streams that form an inlet to the upper or larger lake.” It also related that fishermen and fisherwomen captured 41 fish in two hours, with a Dr. Beagle showing special proficiency in “ ‘snaring’ salmon.”<sup>30</sup> By the time Idaho became a state in 1890, the public in the Sawtooth Valley/Wood River area recognized Alturas and Redfish Lakes as prime locations for fishing.



**Figure 8.** An excursion to Alturas Lake, 1898. *Source: F 00646, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.*

## 1.2 REDFISH LAKE HISTORY, 1891–1945

As Idaho was gaining its statehood, the mining boom collapsed in the Sawtooth region, forcing many settlers to abandon the area. Because of the declining population, Vienna closed its postal facility in 1887 and soon lay dormant; Sawtooth City did the same in 1890. Although Wood

<sup>29</sup> “Bound for the Lakes,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, August 27, 1887, Document No. 0449.

<sup>30</sup> “Wayside Notes,” *The Ketchum Keystone*, August 18, 1888.

River cities such as Ketchum and Hailey continued, the mining towns in the general vicinity of Redfish Lake disappeared. In the words of historian Clark C. Spence, "Before long, not even empty streets existed in some; nature reclaimed its own."<sup>31</sup> Into this void came other industries, such as agriculture and grazing, which slowly brought new residents to the Stanley Basin despite its poor soil, severe climate, and short growing season. According to most historians, the first grazing operations began in the area in 1887 when Frank R. Gooding, future governor of Idaho, herded sheep into the region. Following Gooding's lead, David P. Clark established the first permanent ranch a few miles above Stanley in 1899, and Frank W. Shaw settled at Fisher Creek in 1901. Dave Williams, who would become a prominent guide and outfitter in the area, set up his own ranching operations soon thereafter some miles east of Redfish Lake (Figure 9). Because of these enterprises, according to one source, the whole valley was homesteaded between 1905 and 1930, with 364,000 sheep grazing the Sawtooth Forest by 1907.<sup>32</sup>

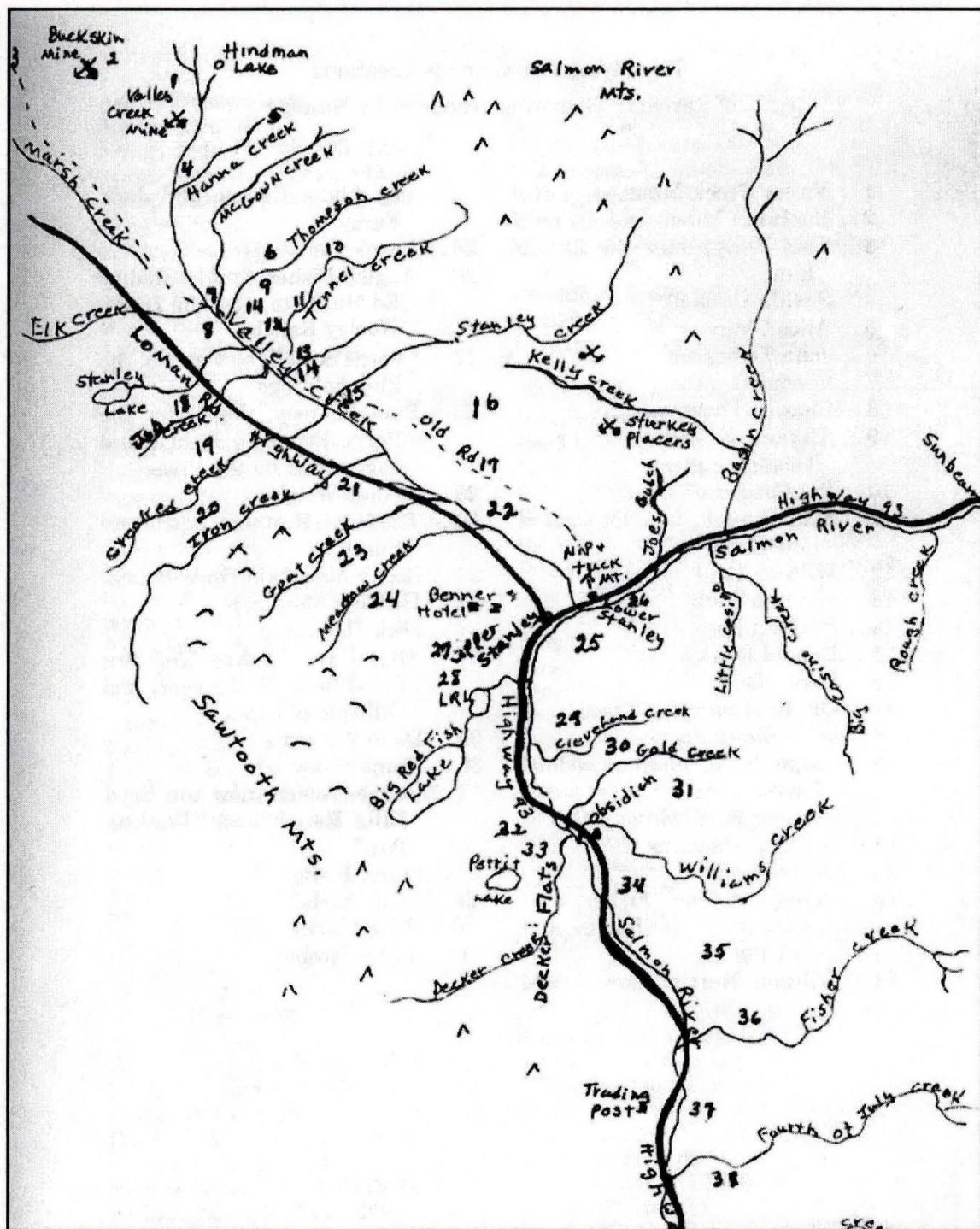
In part to prevent overgrazing from the growing livestock industry, and partly in recognition of the beauty and natural wonder of the Sawtooth Mountains, the federal government decided to create the Sawtooth Forest Reserve in the early 1900s. The lands incorporating the reserve were first withdrawn under a temporary order on December 2, 1902, but the reserve itself was not created until President Theodore Roosevelt issued a proclamation on May 29, 1905 (Figure 10). The initial boundaries included the Redfish Lake area, although Little Redfish Lake, located in Township 10 North, Range 13 East, was not added to the forest until the late 1920s. Several different executive orders and proclamations increased the size of the reserve, and in 1907, Congress changed its name to the Sawtooth National Forest.<sup>33</sup> Although the State of Idaho protested the reserve's creation in 1903 because it "would greatly retard the settlement and

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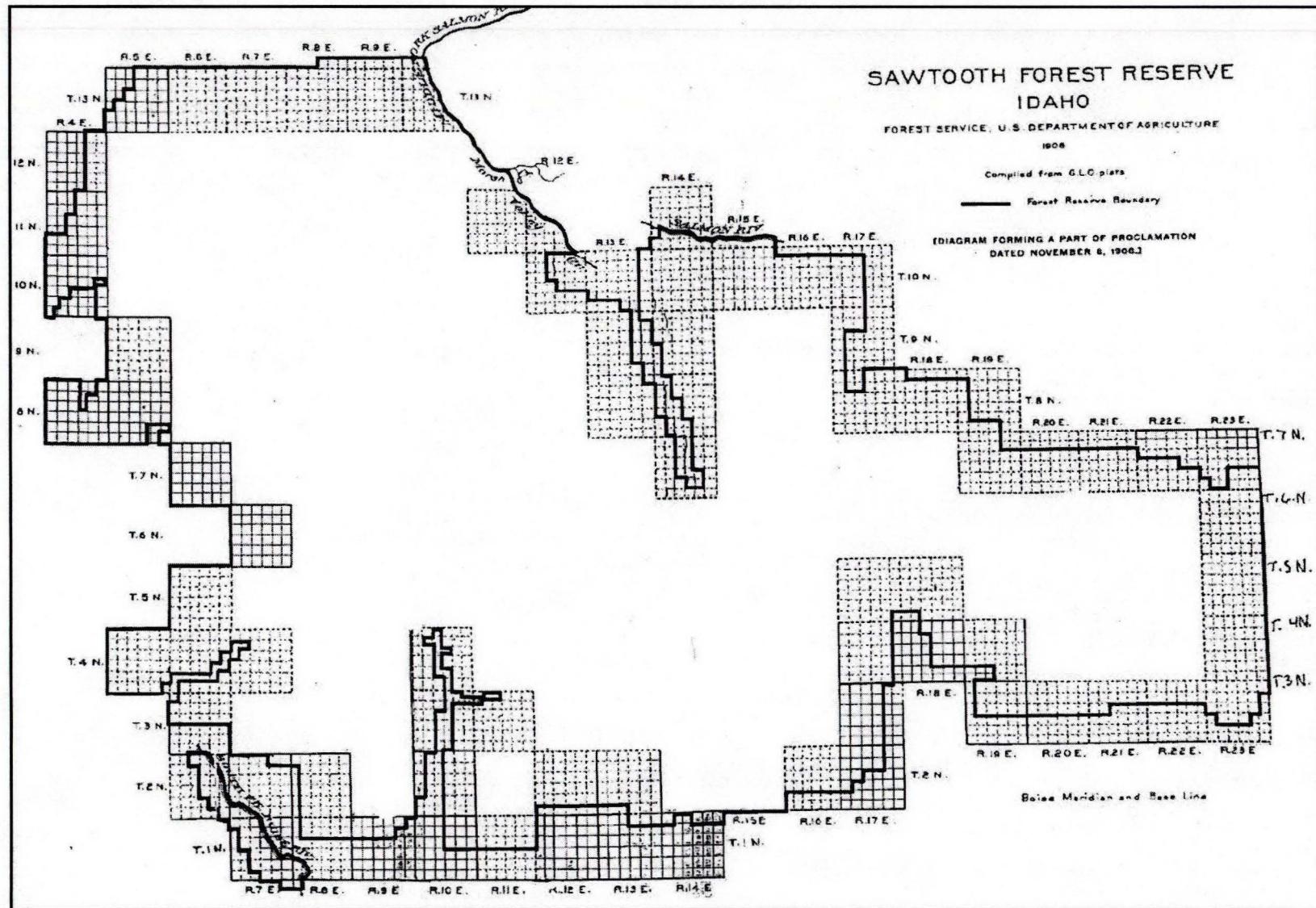
<sup>31</sup> Clark C. Spence, *For Wood River or Bust: Idaho's Silver Boom of the 1880s* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1999), p. 231; see also Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>32</sup> Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, p. 66; Bill Little, "A History of Early Livestock Grazing on Lands of the Sawtooth National Forest," February 1991, p. 27, document provided by Richa Wilson, Document No. 0053; Katherine L. McArthur, "Land of the Sheepeaters: Sawtooth National Recreation Area," p. 17, Binder History References: Explorers and Pioneers R4-1680-92-0035-18, IRO, Document No. 0057; U.S. Forest Service, "History of the Sawtooth National Forest," February 15, 1941, p. 59, SNRA, Document No. 0216.

<sup>33</sup> H. H. Jones, Assistant Chief, Division "R," to Chief, Division "C," December 2, 1902, document supplied by Land Status Office (LSO), IRO, Document No. 0503; "Sawtooth National Forest, Idaho, Boise Meridian," LSO, IRO, Document No. 0293.



**Figure 9.** Some of the early homesteads in the Stanley Basin. No. 24: William Merritt; No. 25: Frank Hellsinger; No. 28: Paul Imeson; No. 30: The Niece Brothers; No. 31: Rocky Mountain Dude Ranch; No. 32: Herman Meissner; No. 33: Dick Horstman; No. 35: Dave Williams. *Source:* Esther Yarber and Edna McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1976), p. 391.



**Figure 10.** The Sawtooth forest reserve, 1906. *Source:* Land Records Office, USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region Office, Ogden, Utah.

development of the resources of that section of Idaho," there is no evidence that the state made any inquiries or claims at the time as to the lake's navigability.<sup>34</sup>

However, when discussions ensued over including Little Redfish Lake in the Forest in the late 1910s, the supervisors of the Sawtooth and Challis National Forests filled out reports listing information about the area, including its relation to navigable streams. Even though Redfish Lake Creek and Little Redfish Lake were located in the study region and Big Redfish Lake was in the vicinity, the Salmon River was the only waterbody listed as navigable, and even it was only navigable "in a very crude way."<sup>35</sup> The reports also noted that Little Redfish Lake and Redfish Lake Creek should be added to the Sawtooth because they were "a necessary part of the proper recreational development of the entire Redfish Lake region"; indeed, "except for recreation, the local residents make practically no use of the area."<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, rangers from the Forest Service began regulating grazing in the forest. In the words of one official, "practically all the National Forest business of this territory is the sheep industry."<sup>37</sup> One of the rangers' missions was to prevent livestock from feeding along the lakes. Even before the reserve was established, Hugh P. Baker of the Bureau of Forestry recommended that the government place open parks around Sawtooth lakes "to furnish sufficient grazing ground for the animals of campers and pleasure seekers . . . , and to prevent sheep from coming uncontrolled around the lakes and polluting the immediate shores, which they have done to such an extent in the past."<sup>38</sup> Likewise, in 1912, W. H. Horton, District Ranger, recommended that all range around Redfish and Alturas Lakes be closed because sheep "spoil good camping places" at

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<sup>34</sup> See "Senate Joint Memorial No. 3, By Baker and Ballentine, March 3, 1903," File LP—Boundaries—Sawtooth—1903-1906, Filing Cabinet L.P. Boundaries, Land Records Office (LRO), IRO, Document No. 0079.

<sup>35</sup> E. A. Renner, "Area Proposed for Addition to Challis National Forest Under Section 8, Clarke-McNary Act," p. 1, File LP—Boundaries—Challis—Redfish Lake Addition 1924-1928, Filing Cabinet Boundaries, LSO, IRO, Document No. 0469.

<sup>36</sup> M. S. Benedict, "Area Proposed for Addition to the Sawtooth National Forest Under Section 8, Clarke-McNary Act," p. 5, Folder L Boundaries; General, 1919-1925, Box 95-82-0220 (6837), Records of the Forest Service, Record Group (RG) 95, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region (NARA-PAR), Seattle, Washington, Document No. 0403.

<sup>37</sup> C. N. Woods, Forest Supervisor, to District Forester, August 17, 1909, Folder L Boundaries General 1909, Box 95-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0417.

<sup>38</sup> Hugh P. Baker, "The Proposed Sawtooth Forest Reserve Idaho: Examination, Report and Recommendations," 1904, p. 14, File LP—Boundaries—Sawtooth—1903-1906, Filing Cabinet L.P. Boundaries, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0080. Whether or not sheep had polluted the shores of Redfish Lake itself is unclear from Baker's report, as he refers to the Redfish Lakes, which included Alturas, Pettit, Yellow Belly, and Stanley (emphasis added).

the “great summer resort[s].”<sup>39</sup> Although these efforts initially forestalled anyone from grazing the immediate area around Redfish Lake,<sup>40</sup> some later stockmen fed their animals close to the waterway, sometimes even with Forest Service approval. A. H. Brailsford, who had a sheep allotment in the Champion Creek area southeast of Redfish Lake, received permission to graze his sheep at Fishhook Creek after September 15, a time when few, if any, tourists visited the lake. The record is unclear about exactly when Brailsford first gained authorization to do this, but he had commenced the practice by 1919 and continued it until at least 1938.<sup>41</sup> In addition, strips of land close to Redfish and Little Redfish Lakes were withdrawn in the 1910s to become part of Stock Driveway No. 48, which was probably a branch of the Ketchum-Stanley driveway that started below Bellevue and went over Galena Summit to Stanley. By the 1930s, Forest Service personnel expressed dismay with the effects of Driveway No. 48 on the lakes, especially since sheep sometimes strayed and grazed near the shoreline.<sup>42</sup> In the words of Richard H. Rutledge, District Forester, “the trailing of about 60,000 sheep along the road near Little Redfish Lake leaves an unsightly condition and one which is objectionable to many people.” The solution in Rutledge’s mind was to build a drift fence along the driveway as an obstruction to the sheep, and to prohibit any grazing close to the lakes.<sup>43</sup> Whether because of the fence or for other reasons, complaints about grazing at Big and Little Redfish Lakes decreased in the 1940s.

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<sup>39</sup> “Sawtooth National Forest Oct 15/12 Dist #3 Grazing Chapter Supervisors Annual Working Plan Administration,” Folder G Management Annual Report 1912, Box 3, Sawtooth National Forest Range Management Records, ca. 1906-1953, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0427.

<sup>40</sup> A 1918 grazing map, for example, indicates that land on the northwestern and northeastern shores of Redfish Lake was closed for all stock. However, because the original map is in color, and the reproduction is not, it is difficult to determine the exact classifications. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, “1918, Sawtooth, Sawtooth National Forest, Idaho, Boise Meridian,” LRO, IRO, Document No. 0255.

<sup>41</sup> District D. #3, “General Grazing Report for the Quarter Ending September 30, 1919,” p. 3, File Grazing Reports, 1917-1923, SNRA, Document No. 0187; “Brailsford, A.H. Allotment,” document provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0278. In the 1960s, a corporation known as Brailsford Bros., presumably the successor to Brailsford, had a sheep allotment for the entire Fishhook Creek drainage. Ralph C. Cisco, District Ranger, to Mr. C. Robert Tucker, April 3, 1967, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0330. Melanie Peterson is the Freedom of Information Act Coordinator for the Sawtooth National Forest.

<sup>42</sup> “Use Restriction Summary Sheet,” File 5490 Status Sawtooth T. 9 N., R. 13 E. Basic Information Sheets, Filing Cabinet Basic Information Sheets Sawtooth National Forest, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0068; “District 3, Annual Grazing Report, 1934, Sawtooth National Forest,” File Grazing Reports 1927-1935, SNRA, Document No. 0215; Benedict, “Area Proposed for Addition to the Sawtooth National Forest Under Section 8, Clarke-McNary Act,” p. 5; Little, “A History of Early Livestock Grazing on Lands of the Sawtooth National Forest,” p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Quotation in Rutledge, “Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests,” p. 16; see also “Ranger District #3, Annual Grazing Report, 1938, Sawtooth N.F.,” File Grazing Reports 1936-1945, SNRA, Document No. 0251; “Ranger District #3, Annual Grazing Report, 1935, Sawtooth N.F.,” File Grazing Reports 1927-1935, SNRA, Document No. 0252; “Ranger District #3, Annual Grazing Report, 1932, Sawtooth National Forest,” File Grazing Reports 1927-1935, SNRA, Document No. 0214.

Meanwhile, individuals applied for homesteads in the region. Under the Forest Homestead Act of June 11, 1906, rangers, according to historian Thomas G. Alexander, had to “investigate and classify lands within the forest thought by applicants to be suitable for agriculture.”

Unfortunately, “many starry-eyed agrarians applied for homesteads on lands poorly suited for farming,” such as those around Redfish Lake.<sup>44</sup> In the summer of 1908, for example, William and Sadie Merritt and their two children arrived in the Stanley Basin and camped at Redfish Lake. Sadie's weariness with the journey convinced her that the family should settle at the lake, but Paul Imeson, who owned a ranch in Upper Stanley, persuaded her and William to homestead near him instead.<sup>45</sup> In 1908, William and Lela Wooley claimed land at the northern end of Redfish Lake in Section 35 of Township 10 North, Range 13 East, placing three houses, a barn, a lean-to chicken coop, a shed, and an outhouse on the property. According to one account, William found little agricultural success in the area, and Lela disliked “the continuous lapping of the waves along the lake shore.” The couple thus left the area in the 1910s, with Wooley becoming a game warden for Idaho near the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.<sup>46</sup> In 1909, Frank Ryder, Acting Supervisor of the Sawtooth National Forest, commented that three individuals, including Frank Hellsinger, had squatters rights in Township 10 North, Range 13 East adjacent to the Salmon River, but these were not located by Redfish.<sup>47</sup> Finally, in 1904, Bernhard Horstman, more commonly known as Dick, settled land to the east of Redfish Lake, obtaining a homestead in 1913 (see Figure 9). Around 1920 he decided to move closer to the lake, and received land near the area that Wooley had abandoned. Horstman, however, decided to forego agriculture or ranching; instead, he received authorization from the Forest Service to build a

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas G. Alexander, *The Rise of Multiple-Use Management in the Intermountain West: A History of Region 4 of the Forest Service* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1987), pp. 49-50. A 1904 map indicates that all land around Redfish Lake was woodland and not cultivable. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Forestry, “Sawtooth Forest Reserve, Idaho,” 1904, LSO, IRO, Document No. 0497. For further information on the poor agricultural prospects of the area, see Benedict, “Area Proposed for Addition to the Sawtooth National Forest Under Section 8, Clarke-McNary Act,” p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, p. 238.

<sup>46</sup> Quotation in Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, p. 286; see also USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, “Cultural Landscape Research, Wooley,” File Wooley HES #?, SNRA, Document No. 0232.

<sup>47</sup> Frank Ryder, Acting Supervisor, “Report on Boundary Examinations for Additions and Eliminations of Lands, Sawtooth National Forest,” July 31, 1909, p. 23, File LP—Boundaries—Sawtooth—1909-1915, Filing Cabinet L.P. Boundaries, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0081.

hotel and boat docks, and he began renting boats to and conducting horseback rides for the waterway's visitors.<sup>48</sup>

It is not known what kind of financial success Horstman gained from this venture, but by the 1920s, Redfish Lake and other regions of the Sawtooth National Forest were becoming increasingly popular. Even with the decline of mining in the 1890s, Redfish Lake remained an ideal camping and fishing spot for many residents of the surrounding area. Photographs from 1903, for example, show campers enjoying the shores and waters of Redfish Lake (Figure 11). Likewise, Mary L. Brown recalled an outing that "the whole town of Ketchum" made to the lake in 1905. Although the road leading to the waterway was "muddy and rutted," the wagons successfully navigated the way, and after two-and-a-half days of traveling, the group arrived at the lake, where they camped, fished, played games, and swam. After a week, they returned to Ketchum where they "looked forward to the next year and another great camping trip."<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, settlers continued to make weeklong fishing trips to the headwaters of the Salmon River during the spawning season. "If large catches were made, the fish were shared with neighbors and friends," chroniclers Esther Yarber and Edna McGown explained. "When the catch was exceptionally large, the surplus was preserved by salting or smoking and was stored for winter."<sup>50</sup> Indeed, even as early as 1915 a Forest Service map marked the area around Redfish Lake as a region of "special scenic interest and recreation" noted for its hunting, fishing, and camping.<sup>51</sup>

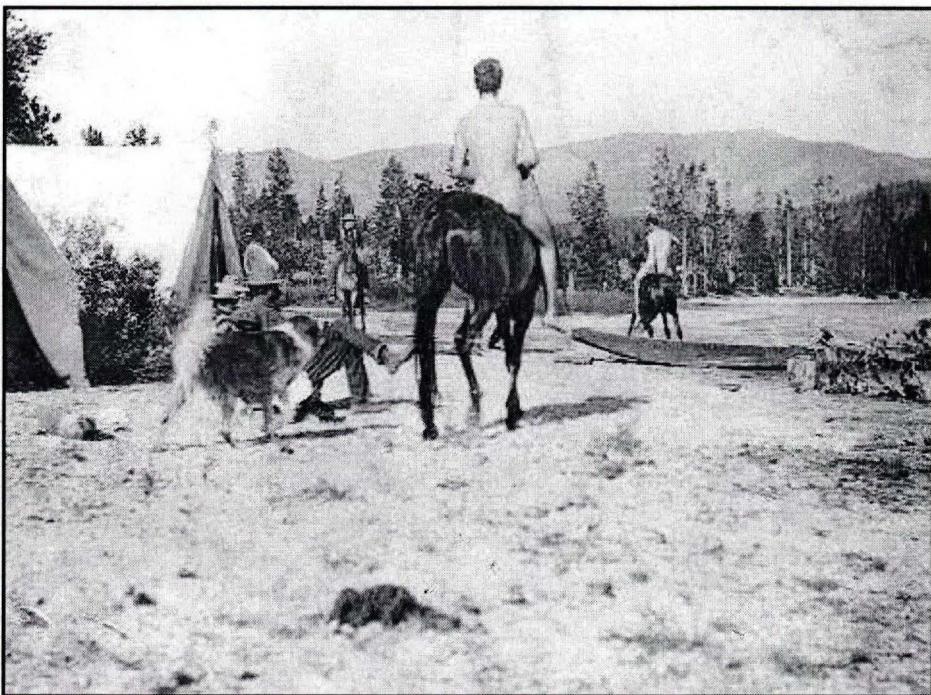
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<sup>48</sup> USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, "Cultural Landscape Research, Horstman," File Horstman 1 Redfish Lake Lodge #72, SNRA, Document No. 0229; Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, pp. 204-205; Stone and Wilson, "Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1446 (10CR1504) Evaluation," p. 2. Although some sources suggest that Horstman's 1913 homestead was at the northern end of Redfish Lake, a letter from the District Forester to Horstman explains that the homestead was actually in Township 9 North, Range 14 East, and that Horstman had first settled there in 1904. District Forester to Mr. Bernhard D. Horstmann, January 27, 1913, File Horstman 1 Redfish Lake Lodge #72, SNRA, Document No. 0231.

<sup>49</sup> Mary L. Brown, "A Trip to Red Fish Lake, 1905," pp. 1-3, Manuscript 02, Regional History Department (RHD), Ketchum Community Library (KCL), Ketchum, Idaho, Document No. 0085.

<sup>50</sup> Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, p. 76. McGown, who was born in Stanley, said that this fishing was primarily recreational and not done out of necessity. Edna McGown interview by Glen Oakley, March 16, 1983, pp. 5-6, Oral History (OH) 1081, Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS), Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0104.

<sup>51</sup> "Sawtooth National Forest Idaho, Boise Meridian, 1915," LRO, IRO, Document No. 0303.



**Figure 11.** Bart Rockwell, Hiram Mecham, and unidentified men at a campsite at Redfish Lake, 1903. *Source:* F 07100, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.

At the same time, the Forest Service began emphasizing the importance of recreational uses in its forests. In 1919, Henry S. Graves, Chief Forester, declared that rangers should develop management plans emphasizing full resource use in national forests, including wildlife and recreation. Sawtooth officials heeded this call with enhancements of recreational opportunities at Redfish, such as the construction of two new miles of road linking Redfish with the main highway in the early 1920s and the improvement of the main highway itself. The Forest Service invited Custer County to participate in the building of the Redfish road, promising that the Service would assume all future maintenance work, but the county declined the offer because of a lack of funds.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the Service withdrew land around the lake for a ranger station in 1908, and, in 1915, it constructed a telephone line connecting Redfish Lake and Horstman's

<sup>52</sup> M. S. Benedict, Forest Supervisor, to The Hon. County Commissioners, Custer County, Challis, Idaho, August 4, 1923, Folder E Roads—Trails Idaho Redfish Lake Road, 1923, Box 2, Sawtooth National Forest Engineering Records, ca. 1914-1958, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0421; M. S. Benedict to The Hon. County Commissioners, Custer County, Challis, Idaho, April 10, 1924, *ibid.*, Document No. 0420; Emmett Donahue, Clerk of the Board, to M. S. Benedict, Forest Supervisor, April 18, 1924, *ibid.*, Document No. 0419.

homestead with Pierson, Idaho. In the 1910s, the Service built several trails leading from the waterway into the mountains, and also erected the first campground and picnic area. Finally, under the Occupancy Act of 1915, the Service began issuing 30-year special use permits to the public rather than annual passes, something which made the construction of tourist facilities on the lake more realistic.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately for Horstman, ill health prevented him from taking full advantage of the improvements and made him unable to care for his hotel and equipment. In the mid-1920s, he hired a man by the name of Kerr to assume the responsibility, but Kerr neglected his duties, leaving the vessels and docks in disrepair. At this point, Robert W. Limbert, already known for his skills in promoting Idaho nature and scenery at the 1915 San Francisco World's Fair, entered the picture. In 1926, Limbert, who had spent considerable time in the 1920s taking people on excursions through the Sawtooth, formed Sawtooth Tours, Inc., a guide service based out of Stanley.<sup>54</sup> In order to enhance the experience of those using Sawtooth Tours, Limbert and his partners decided to build resorts at several of the lakes in the Stanley Basin, and by December 1927 the company had applied for special use permits to construct hotels at Stanley, Alturas, and Redfish Lakes, as well as a campsite at Pettit Lake. Although the Forest Service initially gave its approval to the whole plan, people with summer cabins at Pettit objected to the proposed campsite, and Forest Supervisor Miller S. Benedict rescinded the earlier consent.<sup>55</sup> Limbert

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<sup>53</sup> Alexander, *The Rise of Multiple-Use Management*, p. 68; Stone and Wilson, "Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1446 (10CR1504) Evaluation," p. 2; Rutledge, "Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests," p. 9; C. F. Evans, National Forest Examiner, Memorandum, July 5, 1924, Folder E Roads—Trails Idaho Redfish Lake Road, 1923, Box 2, Sawtooth National Forest Engineering Records, ca. 1914-1958, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0418; "Diary of a Sawtooth Ranger [Bill Horton], February 20, 1915, June 23, 1915, July 3, 1915, July 10, 1915, July 12, 1915, July 18, 1915, July 19, 1915, July 26, 1915, August 5, 1915, August 16, 1915, August 19, 1915, September 15, 1915, SNRA, Document No. 0271; Fred Bennett, Assistant Commissioner, Department of the Interior General Land Office, to Register and Receiver, Hailey, Idaho, March 3, 1908, File 2860 Withdrawal from Mineral Entry Sawtooth N.F. Buzzo, Redfish Lake, Alturas Lake Ranger Station Administrative Sites, Filing Cabinet 2860 Withdrawal from Mineral Entry Sawtooth to Wasatch, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0060.

<sup>54</sup> Heglar, *Redfish Lake Lodge*, n.p. For more information about Limbert, see Nicholas Casner, "'Two-Gun Limbert': The Man from the Sawtooths," *Idaho Yesterdays* 32 (Spring 1988): 2-11.

<sup>55</sup> R. H. Rutledge, District Forester, to Mr. Harry U. Falk, December 29, 1927, Box 2 Folder 14, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Manuscript Series (MSS) 80, Special Collections Department, Albertsons Library, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0138; Stone and Wilson, "Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1446 (10CR1504) Evaluation," p. 2. Falk was one of Limbert's partners in Sawtooth Tours.

continued to pursue development at Stanley, Alturas, and Pettit Lakes, but his attention became increasingly drawn toward Redfish.<sup>56</sup>

In 1927, Limbert approached Horstman about using the hotel and other structures on the lake's northern shore. Horstman was open to Limbert's proposal, and the two concluded an agreement whereby Limbert leased all of Horstman's property at the lake except for the boats, the boating houses, the piers, the docks, and Horstman's home. As part of the contract, Horstman agreed to allow Limbert to remodel any of the leased structures, including the hotel and an icehouse. Limbert, in turn, paid Horstman an annual fee and let him continue running his boating operations, with the stipulation that if Limbert paid Horstman \$1,000 at any time, he could purchase the leased property.<sup>57</sup> Limbert also received a grazing permit from the Forest Service to graze animals, presumably those used on his tours, at Fishhook Creek.<sup>58</sup> With the contract and the permit in place, Limbert sought funding from eastern magnates, such as J. L. Kraft of the Kraft Cheese Company, to remodel and expand the existing hotel into a lodge where eastern and Midwestern "dudes" could come and stay before embarking on hunting, camping, and fishing adventures guided by Limbert. In a proposal to Kraft, Limbert delineated his plans:

My idea is to build on a fifty foot room for a lobby, change the roof to run lengthways and install ten to fourteen rooms upstairs. Outside I want to put up at least six or ten tent cabins floored and boarded up the sides, similar to those in use in the tent camps at Yellowstone Park and other places. And then using this as a nucleus build it up to something worth while. . . . It is an ideal location for a small commissary store, a gasoline station and eventually a garage building. . . . The accomadations [sic] I have noted above would handle approximately 30 to 35 people. Added to the revenue derived from this would be the horse hire, camping, fishing and sight seeing parties, and in the fall the big game hunting parties.

Because of the pristine wilderness surrounding Redfish Lake, Limbert was confident that he could attract numerous tourists to the region.<sup>59</sup> Insisting that "no other place in the state offers

<sup>56</sup> Limbert to Mr. Lewis E. Megowen, July 18, 1928, Box 1 Folder 7, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0122. At the time, Limbert believed that Alturas Lake was not a prime area for recreational development because it was "a swampy place" which would be "a bad place for mosquitos" in the summer. By the mid-1920s, the main structures at Alturas Lake were a ranch and sawmill owned by a Mr. Bradford, although a Mr. Prunty had received a permit in 1915 to build a cabin and boathouse at the lake. See Arthur Berry interview by Glen Oakley, April 4, 1983, p. 3, OH 1083, ISHS, Document No. 0102; "Diary of a Sawtooth Ranger" (Bill Horton), July 13, 1915. Berry was a district ranger in the 1930s.

<sup>57</sup> "Supplemental Agreement," Box 2 Folder 14, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0136.

<sup>58</sup> "Grazing Permit, Bob Limbert, Inc., July 19, 1928," Box 2 Folder 14, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0139.

<sup>59</sup> Limbert to Mr. J. L. Kraft, Kraft Cheese Co., May 23, 1928, Box 1 Folder 6, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0113.

such unusual possibilities" for recreation, Limbert convinced Kraft and others, such as Chicago businessman Lewis Megowen, to finance the project.<sup>60</sup>

With his funding secured, Limbert began renovating Horstman's old hotel. In order to get the necessary timber for the expansion, Limbert set up a logging operation on Redfish Lake's western shore near Fishhook Creek. Despite the numerous lodgepole pines growing in this area, little logging had been done around Redfish prior to this time because of the relative inaccessibility of the area and the lack of a local need.<sup>61</sup> Under Limbert's supervision, however, three to five men felled trees and stacked the logs on special docks. When the time came to float the timber to the building site, the workers tripped the lock on the deck, hooked the logs to a motorboat, and towed them across the lake. As Limbert explained to Kraft, "The timber grows at my very door, [and] can be cut and fallen into the lake and rafted to where we want to use it."<sup>62</sup> These methods enabled Limbert to transport logs measuring 35, 37, 40, and 43 feet across the lake.<sup>63</sup> With this timber he completed the expansion of the lodge and the icehouse in 1929 (Figures 12 and 13), adding six small cabins and a track connecting the boathouse to the docks. That same year he also finished the gas station and the tent cabins, although he faced some rocky moments when Megowen lost his fortune on the stock market and backed out of the project.<sup>64</sup> In addition, when Horstman's health forced him to move to Challis Hot Springs, Limbert obtained

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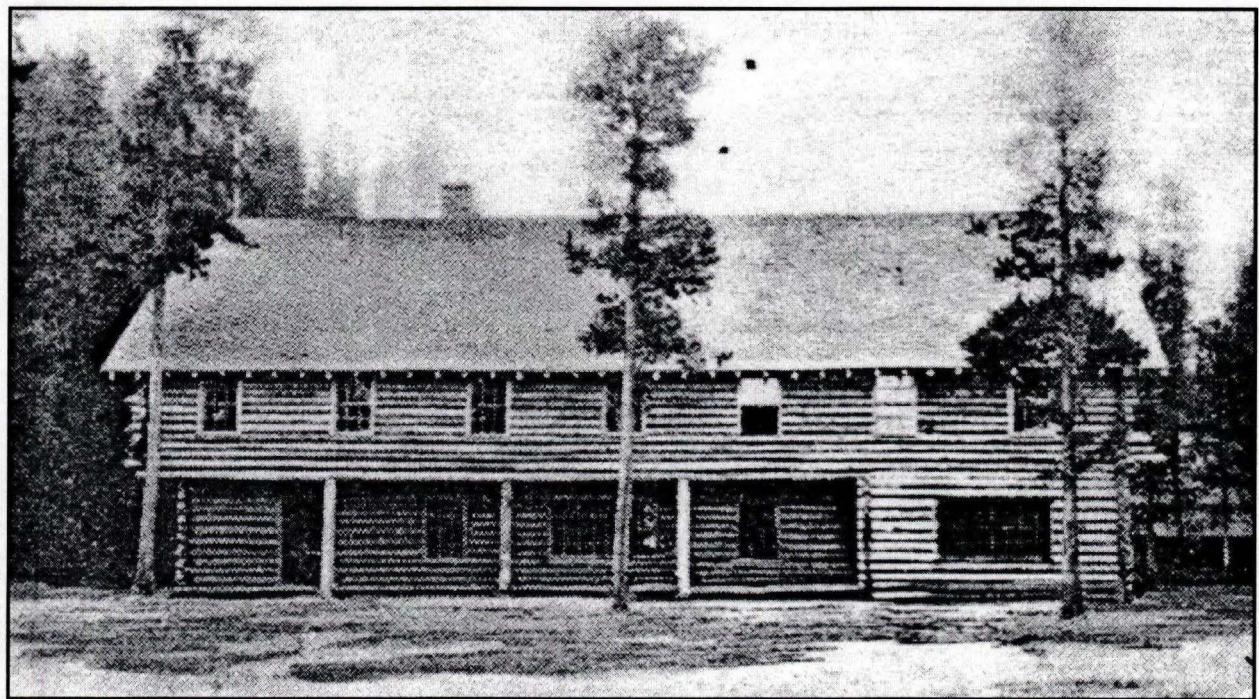
<sup>60</sup> "Possible Income from Redfish Lake Hotel," Box 2 Folder 15, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0141.

<sup>61</sup> M. S. Benedict, Forest Supervisor, to District Forester, May 10, 1921, File S—Plans—Timber Management—Sawtooth—1915-1960, Box 601094, RG 95, Accession No. 095-60A-192, FRC, Document No. 0466. Benedict also stated in 1923 that the Salmon River Circle, which contained Redfish Lake, was "an isolated region with no possible [timber] development of any size in sight." Benedict, "Policy Statement: Sawtooth National Forest," p. 4, *ibid.*, Document No. 0465. In addition, R. H. Rutledge, District Forester, reported in the mid-1920s that the Forest Service would only allow the removal of dead or defective trees from recreational areas in the Sawtooth. "Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests," p. 4.

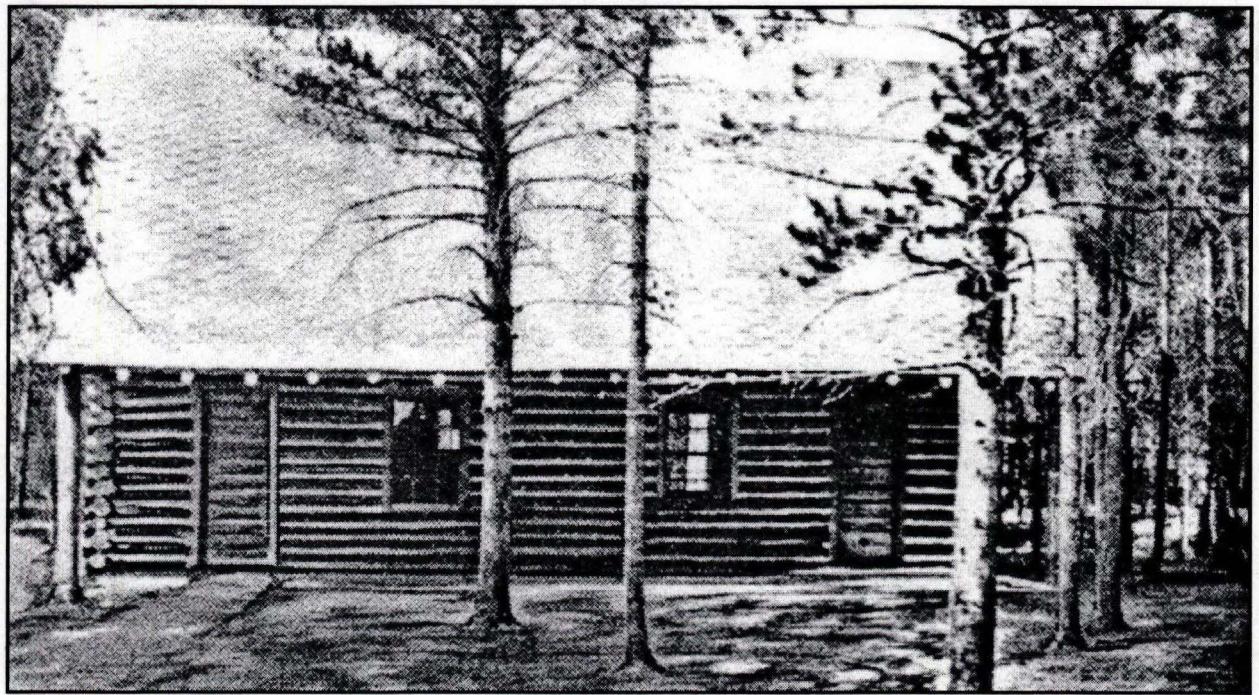
<sup>62</sup> Quotation in Limbert to Kraft, May 23, 1928; see also Limbert to Judge Shanks, September 4, 1929, Box 1 Folder 3, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0133; Invoice entitled "Moving Logs Across Lake and Decking," Box 2 Folder 16, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0142; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, "Administrative Free-Use Permit, Sawtooth National Forest, July 24, 1928," Box 2 Folder 14, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0140.

<sup>63</sup> Limbert to Mr. J. L. Kraft and Mr. L. E. Megowen, September 29, 1928, Box 1 Folder 7, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0123.

<sup>64</sup> Limbert to Mr. Clifford Beegle, June 21, 1929, Box 1 Folder 3, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0134; Limbert to Judge Shanks, September 4, 1929.



**Figure 12.** Redfish Lake Lodge, ca. 1931. *Source: Redfish Lake Lodge (Redfish Lake, Idaho: Redfish Lake Lodge, 1931).*



**Figure 13.** Double cabin at Redfish Lake, ca. 1931. *Source: Redfish Lake Lodge (Redfish Lake, Idaho: Redfish Lake Lodge, 1931).*

the boating concession and equipment.<sup>65</sup> By 1930, then, Limbert had a resort and tourist operation on Redfish Lake that could bring in significant income, and he toyed with plans to build an additional lodge across the lake, accessible only by boat.<sup>66</sup> As a 1931 brochure concluded, "Redfish Lake Lodge, isolated in the heart of the Sawtooth National Forest Reserve, was built for the sportsman, horseback rider, camera hunter, naturalist and student; for the person who wants to turn his back on the grinding roar of the civilized world and seek the quiet and peace of this primitive untouched mountain country."<sup>67</sup>

The construction of Redfish Lake Lodge was merely a component of a larger movement in the 1920s in the Sawtooth National Forest. Numerous guide and outfitter operations, as well as dude ranches, arose during the decade, including ones operated by Frank Shaw and Dave Williams, two of the first ranchers in the Stanley Basin. Arthur Berry, a ranger in the area in the 1930s, stated that the guiding operations developed to provide "good ready cash" to ranchers.<sup>68</sup> According to Edna McGown, who was born in Stanley in 1906, Williams first began his outfitting service in the late 1910s, and others, such as Limbert, Claude Gillespie, and Tom Williams, Dave's son, soon followed.<sup>69</sup> These guides took interested parties into the mountains around the Sawtooth, often sailing across Redfish Lake to reach the trails, and organized fishing expeditions as well. As such excursions grew in popularity, more and more people visited the Sawtooth, including Redfish Lake. It was estimated that by 1925, 6,000 people went to Redfish, Alturas, Pettit, and Yellow Belly Lakes annually, and by 1940, 6,000 went to Redfish Lake alone.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately, the increase in fishermen at Redfish Lake had disastrous results on the fish population. Limbert, for example, claimed to have caught 116 fish in less than two hours on

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<sup>65</sup> Heglar, *Redfish Lake Lodge*, n.p.; Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, p. 205. Horstman died that same year.

<sup>66</sup> Heglar, *Redfish Lake Lodge*, n.p. Limbert's untimely death in 1933 prevented him from constructing the second lodge and also placed the original structure in the hands of George S. Krom. Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, p. 205.

<sup>67</sup> *Redfish Lake Lodge* (Redfish Lake, Idaho: Redfish Lake Lodge, 1931), n.p., copy in Box 2 Folder 13, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0135.

<sup>68</sup> Berry Interview, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> McGown Interview, pp. 27-28.

<sup>70</sup> Rutledge, "Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests," pp. 3-4; Nord, "Inspection Report: Sawtooth National Forest, September 15 to 21, 1940," p. 2.

Redfish, although he threw 110 back; a Mr. Brown averred that fishermen had taken as many as 200 speckled trout in an hour from the lake's outlet.<sup>71</sup> This depletion forced the Forest Service, the Idaho Fish and Game Department, the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries (now known as the Fish and Wildlife Service), and local interests to begin a cooperative restocking program in 1920.

Between 1921 and 1935, these entities placed a total of 107,600 rainbow trout, 22,100 eastern brook, 10,000 cutthroat, 10,000 landlocked salmon, 44,150 redfish, and 5,400,000 smelt eggs in Redfish Lake, while also establishing fish rearing ponds on Fishhook Creek, all to no avail. A biologist in 1935 reported that he could find no trace of the stocked fish, and attributed the problem not only to the large number of fishermen, but also to the poor quality of nourishment that the lake offered.<sup>72</sup> Despite the failure, restocking programs continued throughout the twentieth century (Figure 14).<sup>73</sup>

In addition to fishermen, mountain climbers visited Redfish Lake. In 1935, Williams, Robert Underhill, and Miriam Underhill became the first known whites to scale Mount Heyburn, located directly west of the lake's southern shore (Figure 15); others, such as the Mazamas mountain climbing club, soon followed. These adventurers usually took boats across the lake and set up their base camp at the foot of Heyburn. After climbing the mountain, they would sail back to Redfish Lake Lodge. Although these expeditions were not numerous until after the Second World War, they still brought people to the area in the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile, some individuals began constructing summer homes around Stanley Basin lakes. In 1922, for example, James McDonald, a Hailey millionaire, received a special use permit from the Forest Service to build a dwelling around Pettit Lake, while in 1923, L. L. Breckenridge of Twin

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<sup>71</sup> Bob Limbert to Mr. Homer Robinson, June 14, 1928, Box 1 Folder 3, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0125; Yarber and McGown, *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>72</sup> Rutledge, "Statement of Policy for the Administration of the Sawtooth Mountain Section of the Sawtooth, Boise, and Challis National Forests," p. 13; Rodeheffer, "A Survey of the Waters of the Sawtooth National Forest, Idaho," p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> See Arthur H. Berry's wildlife management reports to the Forest Supervisor for 1938, 1941-1947, in Box 095-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document Nos. 0429-0436.

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence E. Ruch, "Toughest of the 'Sawteeth,'" *Mazama* 22 (December 1940): 15; Betty Higgins, "The Sawtooth Outing," *Mazama* 22 (December 1940): 5-11; Ben Bachman, "Sawtooth Prologue," *Off Belay* (February 1975): 7, clipping in File Mountain Climbing, Pink Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0012. Both *Mazama* articles are in File Climbing in the Sawtooths, 1940, Green (Publications) Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0013.



**Figure 14.** A biplane planting fish in Redfish Lake, 1939. *Source:* F 06917, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.



**Figure 15.** Redfish Lake with Mount Heyburn in the background, 1941. *Source:* F 03615, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.

Falls, Idaho, constructed a two-story log cabin on the south side of Pettit.<sup>75</sup> Similar structures appeared throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with most located at Alturas and Pettit Lakes; Redfish had few, if any. In the late 1920s, Limbert proposed building private summer cabins on the north and south shores of Redfish, but the plan never came to fruition.<sup>76</sup> One reason was because of Limbert's sudden death in 1933; another was the Forest Service's reluctance to allow extensive private development at Redfish. Miller S. Benedict, the Forest Supervisor at the time, believed that Pettit Lake was a good site for summer homes because of its "comparatively low value for public camping," but areas such as Redfish Lake, which had high recreational value, should not be spoiled by such construction.<sup>77</sup> Because of this opposition, no summer homes materialized at Redfish.<sup>78</sup>

But as more visitors came to the area, the Forest Service realized that camping and other facilities at Redfish Lake were inadequate, Limbert's improvements and its own efforts notwithstanding. The chance to upgrade these services came in the 1930s during the Great Depression. As part of the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to employ young men and to make improvements on federal lands.<sup>79</sup> In 1933, the government assigned a unit of the CCC containing approximately 75 men to Redfish Lake, and from 1937 to 1940 this group, headquartered at the waterway's outlet, constructed roads, new campgrounds, telephone lines, the Sawtooth Valley Ranger Station, and the Redfish Lake Guard Station. The men also rehabilitated some bridges in the area, including one on Redfish Lake Creek, and worked on fire suppression. Because of its work, one publication

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<sup>75</sup> Ronald L. James, "Study of Historic and Cultural Resources at the Pettit Lake Summer Homes Area, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Sawtooth National Forest," January 16, 1995, p. 31, SNRA Files, Document No. 0456; "Special Use Permit, Uses, Sawtooth, Breckenridge, L.L., Summer Home 7-1-23," document provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0350; Elizabeth Sliger interview by Thomas G. Alexander, May 17, 1984, p. 9, Forest Service History Series No. 102, File R4-1680-92-0024-102, IRO, Document No. 0050.

<sup>76</sup> Incomplete letter signed Bob Limbert, Box 1 Folder 8, Robert W. Limbert Papers, Document No. 0116.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in James, "Study of Historic and Cultural Resources at the Pettit Lake Summer Homes Area," pp. 27-28.

<sup>78</sup> In the late 1940s, there was a proposal to develop a Redfish Creek Summer Home area. Although initial plans were drawn up, the actual development never occurred for unknown reasons. W. L. Nicholls to A. L. Anderson, June 7, 1949, File E Improvements, Sawtooth, General Older Than 3 Yrs., Box 932105, RG 95, Accession 095-57B-0247, Federal Records Center (FRC), Denver, Colorado, Document No. 0487; W. L. Nicholls to Forest Supervisor, August 15, 1949, *ibid.*, Document No. 0488; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Region 4, Division of Recreation and Lands, Sawtooth National Forest, Recreation District 3 Zone A, "Preliminary Plan: Redfish Creek Summer Home Area," *ibid.*, Document No. 0498.

<sup>79</sup> T. H. Watkins, *The Great Depression: American in the 1930s* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p. 130.

concluded that “the CCC program has been a God-send for the Sawtooth Forest . . . [because] many of the worthwhile jobs could not have been accomplished” otherwise.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the CCC’s work laid the foundation for the recreational boom that occurred at Redfish Lake after the Second World War.

Meanwhile, the federal government examined additional uses for the lake. In 1926, George Otis Smith, Director of the United States Geological Survey, issued Power Site Classification No. 155 which designated lands in the Bear Valley and Stanley Basin as areas of potential waterpower. This order embraced a couple of lots in Section 35, Township 10 North, Range 13 East, on the northern shore of Redfish Lake. No other areas directly surrounding the lake received this designation, although some land along the Salmon River was included. Despite the classification, the Federal Power Commission reported in 1960 that there had been “no applications to develop power within the area.”<sup>81</sup>

In September 1937 the Bureau of Reclamation decided that Redfish Lake could provide irrigation water to the Boise region, and it withdrew the lake and its shores from public entry under a first form reclamation withdrawal. The Bureau planned on placing the lands under the purview of the Boise Reclamation Project, which was authorized in 1905.<sup>82</sup> This was not the first time that the Bureau had suggested such a scheme; in the 1920s it had proposed using Redfish Lake as a reservoir for southern Idaho, but the Forest Service had refused to consent, considering the plan “impracticable” because “its cost would be stupendous and the engineering problems doubtful of solution.”<sup>83</sup> By 1937, such objections had disappeared, and the Forest

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<sup>80</sup> Quotation in U.S. Forest Service, “History of the Sawtooth National Forest,” February 15, 1941, p. 45, see also pp. 44, 46; Goodwin and Hussey, *Sawtooth Mountain Area Study*, p. 80; Ralph Scotty MacFee Reminiscences, File CCC Camp Information/Ralph MacFee, Orange (Subjects) Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0014; “Proposed Camp Locations Showing Projects and Number of Men for Five Central Idaho Forests and for Neighboring Work Agencies,” File O—Supervision—Civil Works (Emergency Relief)—1933, Box 327991, RG 95, Accession No. 095-58C-0084, FRC, Document No. 0491. The SNRA office has a scrapbook of photographs from a CCC worker showing the replacement of the Redfish Lake Creek bridge.

<sup>81</sup> Quotation in Floyd Iverson to Chief, Forest Service, January 4, 1960, Folder 2320 Wilderness and Primitive Areas Sawtooth Wilderness Area (Proposed), Correspondence 1960-1963, Box 1, Sawtooth National Forest Wilderness and Primitive Areas, ca. 1936-1971, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0426; see also Geo. Otis Smith, Director, “Power Site Classification No. 155,” attachment to Geo. Otis Smith to The Honorable, The Secretary of the Interior, December 1, 1926, File U Classification General 1917 to 1935, Unlabeled Filing Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0038.

<sup>82</sup> R.B. Williams, Acting Commissioner, to The Secretary of the Interior, September 3, 1937, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Records, Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0159; see also Township Plat, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0291.

<sup>83</sup> Benedict, “Area Proposed for Addition to the Sawtooth National Forest Under Section 8, Clarke-McNary Act,” p. 5.

Service supported the withdrawal. However, after a few years, the Bureau determined that it was “extremely doubtful” that it would ever use the lake for reclamation “because of its present development and heavy use for recreation purposes as well as low storage value.”<sup>84</sup> Yet the Bureau did not rescind the withdrawal, meaning that the Forest Service had to consult with the agency about any improvement on the lake. By 1961, the Service was tired of the situation, and requested that the Bureau restore the land. “Our permittees are expending considerable sums for recreational developments at Redfish Lake,” the Service claimed, “and our programs would be facilitated if the reclamation withdrawal did not exist.”<sup>85</sup> The Bureau finally rescinded the withdrawal in 1972, abolishing the requirement of clearing with it any applications for “small tracts, recreation sites or restorations to mineral location.” The agency also stated that the area was free from “any existing leases, licenses or special use permits issued by the Bureau of Reclamation.”<sup>86</sup>

Public land transactions around Redfish Lake also occurred in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. In accord with Section 4 of the 1890 law admitting Idaho into the United States, the state was granted Sections 16 and 36 of every township “for the support of common schools.”<sup>87</sup> With the approval of the secretary of the interior, the state could choose what acreage it wanted, and in 1918, 1922, 1923, and 1926, it obtained land in Sections 16 and 36 of Township 9 North, Range 13 East. A portion of Redfish Lake rested in Section 16, but the state's selections did not directly

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<sup>84</sup> Untitled Document, p. 10, Folder 2320 Wilderness and Primitive Areas: Sawtooth Wilderness Area (proposed) Folder #1—Brochure, Box 1, Sawtooth National Forest Wilderness and Primitive Areas, ca. 1936-1971, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0425.

<sup>85</sup> Quotation in Floyd Iverson, Regional Forester, to Mr. Harold T. Nelson, Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, May 3, 1961, File 2760 Withdrawals Redfish Lake, Black Downstairs Filing Cabinet, Stanley Ranger Station, Stanley, Idaho, Document No. 0185; see also Floyd Iverson to Mr. Harold T. Nelson, December 27, 1965, File 2760 Withdrawals Reclamation—Idaho, Filing Cabinet Withdrawals Other Agencies, LSO, IRO, attachment to Document No. 0460.

<sup>86</sup> Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, to State Director, Bureau of Land Management, June 21, 1972, File 2860 Withdrawal from Mineral Entry Bureau of Reclamation, Sawtooth N.F. Revocation, PLO 5499 I-5276, Filing Cabinet 2860 Withdrawal from Mineral Entry Sawtooth to Wasatch Ogden, UT, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0061. Although the State of Idaho might have commented on both the 1937 withdrawal and the 1972 restoration, no correspondence was found between the state and the Bureau of Reclamation, or between the state and the Forest Service, about the actions.

<sup>87</sup> Act of July 3, 1890 (26 Stat. 215), Document No. 0458.

border the waterway.<sup>88</sup> In addition, the Forest Service withdrew lands along the lake's shores for administrative and public use sites. One of these withdrawals transpired in 1939 because, in the words of District Ranger Arthur Berry, the lands removed had more value as recreational lands "than any other use."<sup>89</sup> By the end of the Second World War, land around Redfish Lake had different owners and different uses: most was federal recreation land under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, although subject to reclamation and power site classifications; private parties had homesteaded and improved other areas under special use permits; and a few tracts belonged to the state.

### 1.3 REDFISH LAKE HISTORY, 1946-PRESENT

Although visitors continued to use Redfish Lake in the 1930s, tourism slowed considerably when the United States entered the Second World War. Redfish Lake Lodge even shut its doors for the war's duration. After the conflict ended, people returned to the area, with approximately 10,000 vacationing at the lake in 1947. This increased usage corresponded with a tourism boom in postwar America. As incomes rose and Americans' leisure time grew, large numbers embraced the recreational opportunities that the nation afforded.<sup>90</sup> The major problem for the Forest Service was producing enough funds to develop the necessary accommodations for these visitors. A report issued in the late 1940s indicated that most of the Forest Service's funds came from "special use permits of private cabin owners and from resorts doing business on the national forests," as well as from "grazing fees, sales of timber and miscellaneous sources." Some wondered whether or not "States, Counties and Cities should provide recreational facilities on Federally-owned lands," but the suggestion was rejected because federal recreation areas were "out of their jurisdiction." Instead, the report concluded, national Forest Service fees

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<sup>88</sup> "Approved List No. 16 of School Indemnity Lands," p. 4, BLM Records, Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0156; "Approved List No. 34 of School Indemnity Lands," n.p., *ibid.*, Document No. 0157; District Forester to Forest Supervisor, August 15, 1918, File L Status General, Unlabeled Filing Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0031; R. H. Rutledge, District Forester, to Forest Supervisor, September 21, 1926, File L-Status General, Unlabeled Filing Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0045; Acting Assistant District Forester to Forest Supervisor, January 3, 1923, *ibid.*, Document No. 0046.

<sup>89</sup> Arthur H. Berry, District Ranger, to Forest Supervisor, December 19, 1939, File U-Classification—Sawtooth, Public Service Sites—Redfish Lake Area, Filing Cabinet U-Administrative Sites U-Classification Toiyabe Status Check, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0064.

<sup>90</sup> John Patrick Diggins, *The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace, 1941-1960* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), pp. 178-187.

should be implemented to supplement the Service's income, and a pilot program in California was introduced as an experiment.<sup>91</sup>

While the federal government debated the merits of fees, other Forest Service studies showed that existing facilities at Redfish, which included two campgrounds, were inadequate for the increased visitation of the post-war era. The report offered several suggestions for expansion, such as creating an area for summer homes adjacent to the lake (a proposal that entered the planning stage, but, for unknown reasons, was never realized<sup>92</sup>), improving Highway 93, and developing the waterway's eastern shore. If the Forest Service implemented such changes, the report concluded, Redfish Lake could accommodate up to 40,000 additional visitors. Another analysis issued in 1956 indicated that the Forest Service should expand facilities on the north end of the lake, especially between the lodge and Fishhook Creek, and that an existing trailer park on the east shore should be enlarged as well. In response to these recommendations, the Forest Service withdrew 897 acres around Redfish in 1955 and 1,430 acres in 1960 for recreational development, stating that this land had "higher values for recreational use than for any other purpose."<sup>93</sup>

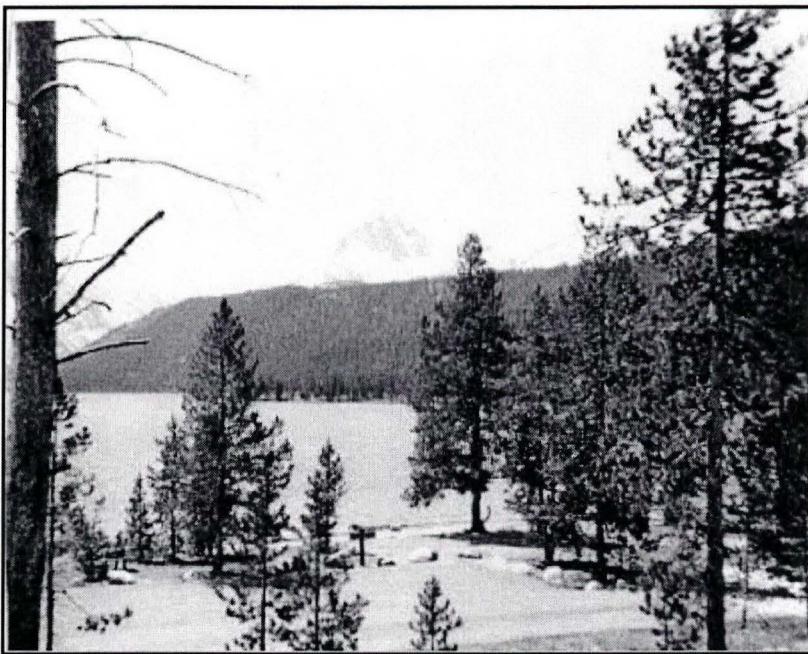
In 1958, the era of major improvements at Redfish Lake began. That year, according to the Forest Service, was "a benchmark date for Forest Service recreation development at Redfish Lake" because of an outpouring of new construction (Figure 16). Within ten years, the Service had built Redfish Outlet Campground and Point Campground, a boat launch at Sandy Beach, and a visitor center used to educate the public about the history and resources of the area. At the same time, Redfish Lake Enterprises, Inc., which, under the leadership of Robert Coiner and C.

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<sup>91</sup> "Origin and History of the Forest Service," n.p., document provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0509.

<sup>92</sup> See footnote 78. In the 1960s, however, the state of Idaho sold 44 lots on a knoll overlooking the Salmon River near Redfish Lake, and the owners placed several buildings and trailers at the site. Although the knoll was near the lake, it was not next to it, nor was it on the land immediately surrounding the waterway. See handwritten attachment to P. M. Rees, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, August 21, 1968, File 1510 Congress Sawtooth NRA (Proposed) 1/68-12/68, History Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0006.

<sup>93</sup> Quotations in "U Classification, Public Service Site Withdrawals, Redfish Lake, Sawtooth National Forest," March 23, 1948, p. 3, Map Collection Improvements, Sign Map, Section Corners, SNFO, Document No. 0243; see also "Forest Supervisor, 12/10/56," p. 12, Folder O-Inspection General (Inspection Reports) ex. 1956, Box 1, Sawtooth National Forest Operative Records, ca. 1951-1963, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0438; "Use Restriction Tabular Record, 7-1-1972, 5-31-1979, Sawtooth Forest, T 9 N., R 13 E., SNRA, Document No. 0307.



**Figure 16.** A parking area at Redfish Lake with Mount Heyburn in the background, 1961. *Source:* F 07553, Photograph Filing Cabinet, RHD, KCL.

Robert Tucker, owned Redfish Lake Lodge, made several additions to its holdings, including the construction of two small motels.<sup>94</sup> A special use permit issued in 1960 authorized the corporation to maintain and operate “cabins, store, service station, restaurant, lounge (bar), boat rentals, pier and boat landings, and trailer parking areas,” with the stipulation that such operations not hinder any reclamation development in the area.<sup>95</sup> Two other entrepreneurs proposed building a golf course and lodge at Alturas and Redfish Lakes, but apparently the Service did not approve the request because no course was constructed. Finally, the Salmon

<sup>94</sup> Quotation in Stone and Wilson, “Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1446 (10CR1504) Evaluation,” p. 3; see also “Proposed Withdrawal of Land from the General Mining Laws, Idaho 05281,” BLM Records, Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0162; Havenor, “Redfish Lake and Recreation Area Idaho,” File 1650 Contacts and Other Historical Data Sawtooth National Forest, Unlabeled Filing Cabinet, SNFO, Document No. 0035.

<sup>95</sup> “Term Special Use Permit, Redfish Lake Enterprises Inc.,” May 5, 1960, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0316.

River Electric Co-op received a special use permit in 1966 to build a transmission line to the lake, providing additional electrical service to the lodge.<sup>96</sup>

After the intense development of the 1960s, Redfish Lake's resources included three campgrounds, two boat launching ramps, two swimming areas, a picnic area, a general store, a gas station, and a lodge. Combined with the services offered at Alturas, Pettit, Yellow Belly, and Stanley Lakes, the region offered eight campgrounds, four organization camps, two lodges, thirty-two summer homes, three swimming sites, two observation sites, two boat docks, three boat ramps, and a picnic area. People flocked to the area to make use of these developments, with nearly 90,000 visiting Redfish Lake annually in the 1960s and over 60,000 going to Alturas Lake.<sup>97</sup>

As more people became aware of Redfish Lake and the Sawtooth area, Congress discussed whether the pristine beauty of the Sawtooth National Forest should be preserved as a national park. These arguments were not new; the Idaho Federation of Women's Clubs (IFWC), led by Jean Conly Smith, made the first proposal in 1911 after deciding that the area around Redfish Lake deserved park status.<sup>98</sup> With the IFWC's prodding, Senator William E. Borah (R-Idaho) and Representative Addison T. Smith (R-Idaho) introduced a bill into Congress in 1913 to create the Sawtooth National Park. The legislation stalled because of concerns about access roads to the Sawtooth, leading Borah and Senator James H. Brady (R-Idaho) to test the highways themselves. In July 1915 Brady traversed the wagon road leading to Redfish Lake in an automobile, and Borah followed a few weeks later. After their trips, both expressed a renewed

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<sup>96</sup> Grady Spradling to Senator Frank Church, January 5, 1959, Box 12 Folder 2, Frank Church Papers, MSS 56, Special Collections, Albertsons Library, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, Document No. 0153; Frank Church, United States Senator, to Mr. Grady Spradling, January 12, 1959, *ibid*; "Special Use Permit Sheet, T. 9 N., R. 13 E., Boise Meridian, Sawtooth N.F., State Idaho, County Custer," File 5490 Status Sawtooth T. 9 N., R. 13 E. Basic Information Sheets, Filing Cabinet Basic Information Sheets Sawtooth National Forest, LRO, IRO, Document No. 0071.

<sup>97</sup> Virlis L. Fischer, "Sawtooth Wilderness or Park?" File 1510 Congress—Sawtooth NRA (Proposed) Sawtooth National Park—10/29/59-12/28/65, History Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0011. One study suggested that the reason for the higher number of visitors at Redfish Lake was because the Forest Service had promoted and developed the area to a greater extent than the other waterways. Roger Cannon, "Appraisal of Lake Alturas Lodge Inc., Blaine County, Idaho, for: Sawtooth National Forest," April 10, 1967, p. 24, document provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0285.

<sup>98</sup> See E. Grandjean, Supervisor, to Mr. C. N. Woods, May 28, 1912, Folder L Boundaries General 1912, Box 95-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0415; d'Easum, *Sawtooth Tales*, pp. 212-213. For information about the proposed park boundaries, see E. A. Herman, District Forester, to Forest Supervisor, January 10, 1913, Folder L Boundaries General 1913-1918, Box 95-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0410; C. N. Woods, Forest Supervisor, to District Forester, January 13, 1913, *ibid*; C. N. Woods to Forest Supervisor, March 14, 1913, *ibid*, Document No. 0409.

commitment to get the legislation passed, but they faced opposition from agricultural, mining, and timber groups who were concerned about losing access to resources. Because of this resistance, Borah's enthusiasm soon waned, and the bill died in Congress. The 1930s saw a renewal of the national park debate, and these efforts resulted in the 1937 Primitive Area designation of 200,000 acres in the Sawtooth located just outside of the Redfish region.<sup>99</sup>

When Frank Church (D-Idaho) was elected to the Senate in 1956, park discussions resumed. In 1959 the Forest Service began a multiple-use study of the Sawtooth Mountain region, a task that was easily accomplished because the Service had been practicing multiple-use management in the area for years. As the study developed, Church proposed creating a park out of the Sawtooth Primitive Area, but opposition from cattlemen and sporting groups killed the measure. Church then introduced legislation in 1963 establishing the Sawtooth Wilderness National Park out of a section of the Sawtooth National Forest. Although a national park, this unit would retain a wilderness designation, thereby remaining under the stewardship of the Forest Service.

However, the National Park Service (NPS) objected to this plan, wanting to keep all parks under its control. Thus, in 1966, Idaho's other senator, Republican Len Jordan, proposed designating part of the Sawtooth as a National Recreation Area which, under the administration of the Forest Service, would provide numerous recreation opportunities to the public. Because the Service would continue multiple-use management in the area, more grazing, hunting, mining, and lumbering would occur than in a national park. At the same time, designating the region as a recreation area would prevent a territorial dispute with the NPS.<sup>100</sup>

Several interests enthusiastically supported the measure. Robert Tucker, manager of Redfish Lake Lodge, testified before a U.S. Senate hearing that "the Forest Service has done an excellent job of developing and maintaining the recreation facilities that are under its jurisdiction," and he declared that a National Recreation Area "under the supervision of the Forest Service would be more to the advantage of all of the people."<sup>101</sup> The Idaho State Legislature even approved of the

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<sup>99</sup> Sara E. Dant Ewert, "Peak Park Politics: The Struggle over the Sawtooths, from Borah to Church," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 91 (Summer 2000): pp. 138-139, 141, Document No. 0360; d'Easum, *Sawtooth Tales*, pp. 212-219.

<sup>100</sup> Ewert, "Peak Park Politics," pp. 141-144; Alexander, *The Rise of Multiple-Use Management in the Intermountain West*, p. 193.

<sup>101</sup> Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Sawtooth Park or Recreation Area: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs*, 89th Cong., 2d sess., June 13 and 14, 1966, pp. 116-117, Document No. 0447.

measure, although it demanded that the Idaho Fish and Game Department retain the management of fish and wildlife in the region. In a resolution urging Congress to allow Fish and Game to continue its authority, the legislature said nothing about jurisdiction over the lakes and rivers in the area, even though it strongly condemned any usurpation of state authority in fish and wildlife management.<sup>102</sup> But not all parties approved of the plan. Owners of summer homes at Pettit Lake objected after the Forest Service informed them that “to the best of our knowledge, the lands occupied by your homes would be needed for public use by 1982.” After protesting to the Service and before congressional hearings, the owners finally received assurance from Senators Church and Jordan that they could keep their homes.<sup>103</sup> With this opposition dissipated, the two senators focused on passing the legislation, and in 1972, their efforts culminated in the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA), embracing the Sawtooth Mountains and the Stanley Basin (Figure 17).<sup>104</sup>

The establishment of the SNRA brought some changes to Redfish Lake. The main difference was the replacement of ranger districts in the area with an overall SNRA administration. Gray Reynolds, the first superintendent of the SNRA, believed that the new administrative structure would “allow the SNRA staff great mobility in planning usage for the 754,000 acres under its jurisdiction,” but others wondered whether the designation would actually increase the number of tourists to alarming levels.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, by 1975 the Forest Service already considered the lake “congested,”<sup>106</sup> and a preliminary development and management plan recognized that the waterway “has had the most intensive development and has received the heaviest recreation use

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<sup>102</sup> “In the House of Representatives, House Joint Memorial No. 12 by State Affairs Committee,” in Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Sawtooth National Recreation Area: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs*, 92d Cong., 2d sess., April 12 and 13, 1972, p. 201, Document No. 0448.

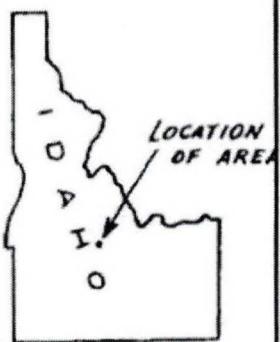
<sup>103</sup> Quotation in James, “Study of Historic and Cultural Resources at the Pettit Lake Summer Homes Area,” p. 36; see also Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, *Sawtooth Park or Recreation Area*, pp. 136-138, 192-193; L. K. Clark Memorandum to Idaho Forest Supervisors, R-1 and R-4, May 18, 1971, File Sawtooth NRA Proposal, Yellow (Sawtooth NRA History) Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0026.

<sup>104</sup> Act of August 22, 1972 (86 Stat. 612), Document No. 0502; Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” pp. 142-144, 146; d’Easum, *Sawtooth Tales*, pp. 219-220. In addition, the Sawtooth Primitive Area became known as the Sawtooth Wilderness. Robert F. Hoag, Jr., interview by Thomas G. Alexander, May 18, 1984, p. 2, Forest Service History Series 57, IRO, Document No. 0051.

<sup>105</sup> Quotation in “Forest Service Administers Sawtooth NRA from Ketchum,” *The Twin Falls Times-News*, August 27, 1972, Document No. 0027; see also “Sawtooth NRA to Bring Change,” *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> “Proposed Sawtooth National Park-National Recreation Area/Idaho: Study Report and Plan,” March 1975, p. 38, File Sawtooth Study Plan: Proposed National Park/Natural Recreation Area; Idaho, Bernie’s Brown Filing Cabinet, Stanley Ranger Station, Stanley, Idaho, Document No. 0253.

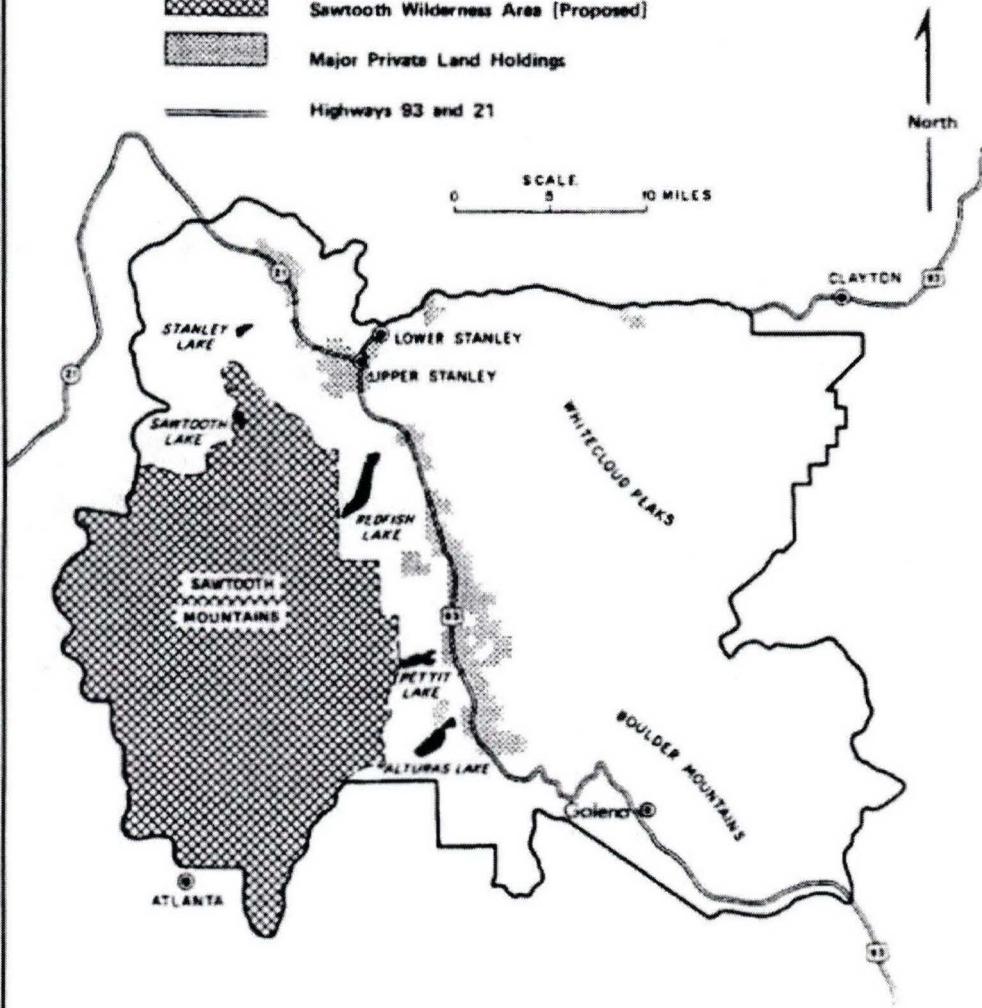
# Proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area



- National Recreation Area Boundary (Proposed)
- - - Sawtooth Wilderness Area Boundary (Proposed)
- Sawtooth Wilderness Area (Proposed)
- Major Private Land Holdings
- Highways 93 and 21

SCALE  
0 5 10 MILES

↑  
North



**Figure 17.** Proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area, 1971. *Source:* Fred Hutchinson Papers, MSS 124, Special Collections, Albertsons Library, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho.

of all the NRA complexes.” By the mid-1970s Redfish Lake had six campgrounds, two picnic sites, two boating sites, three swimming sites, and a visitor center for public use, but even with these services, the Forest Service argued that it needed to tap into the lake’s “considerable undeveloped potential” to accommodate the growing number of visitors. The Service recommended enlarging a narrow beach between the Sandy Beach Boat Ramp and the Redfish Outlet Campground; developing an artificial beach at Little Redfish Lake; expanding the Inlet Transfer Camp; and building a 500-seat amphitheater north of the visitor center.<sup>107</sup>

Another report called for constructing a Redfish Lake Transfer Camp; improving the lake’s boating facilities; rehabilitating the water system; converting the Redfish Outlet Campground to day use; and constructing six more miles of bicycle and hiking trails (Figure 18).<sup>108</sup>

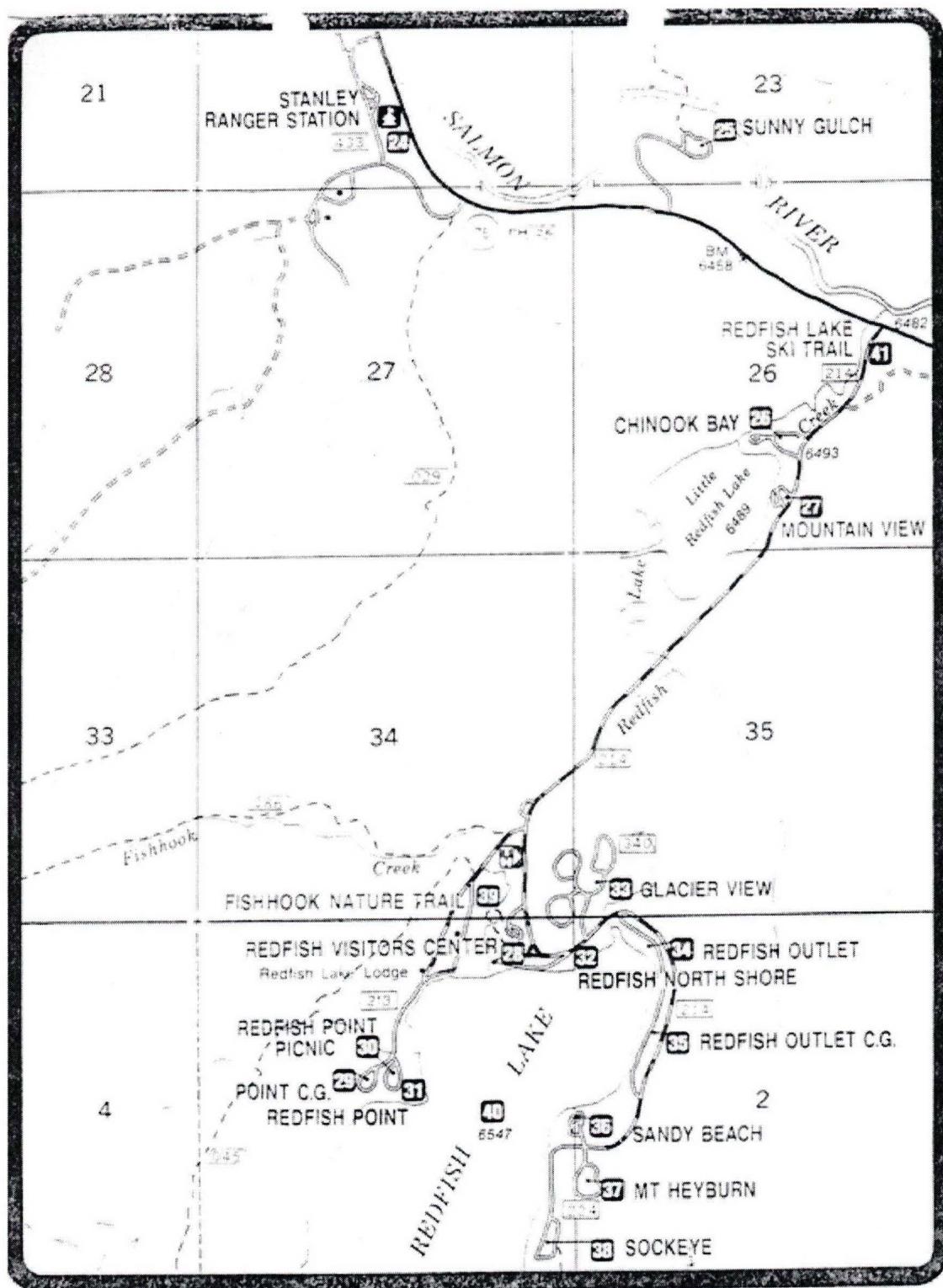
Meanwhile, development continued at Redfish Lake Lodge, which Donald and Jack See took over in the 1970s. With Forest Service approval, the Sees replaced temporary tent and trailer pads at the lodge with permanent buildings, removed the icehouse, remodeled the garage, added to the lodge and the store, relocated the gas station, and built rental cabins, a manager’s cabin, and a public restroom. In addition, See reconstructed horse corrals, and erected stock buildings, a laundry/shower house, and cabins for employees.<sup>109</sup> These facilities allowed Redfish Lake to offer the same recreational opportunities that it had since the 1920s—namely, camping, fishing, horseback riding, mountain climbing, and boating. Most of the commercial services revolved around Redfish Lake Lodge. According to the Forest Service, the lodge was the only “commercial operation” on Redfish Lake, which was technically true, although the lodge leased out outfitting and guide operations to Mystic Saddle Ranch. The lodge offered shuttle services across the lake to the Redfish Inlet Campground, where many of the hiking trails began, conducted tours of the lake by pontoon boat, and operated a marina that rented out kayaks, canoes, outboards, paddleboats, and other water equipment. Public camping and fishing sites

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<sup>107</sup> “Review Draft: Preliminary Development and Management Plan, Proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area,” File Preliminary Development and Management Plan—Proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area, 1966-67, Yellow (Sawtooth NRA History) Filing Cabinet, SNRA, Document No. 0020.

<sup>108</sup> “SNRA Gen. Mgt. Plan, Pg. 166-268 Area Plan 400-900 & Appendix,” pp. 260-262, document provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0280.

<sup>109</sup> Stone and Wilson, “Excerpt from Redfish Lake Lodge Historic District Site SW-1466 (10CR1504) Evaluation,” p. 3; “Term Special Use Permit, Record No. 70, Redfish Lake Lodge Inc.,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0314.



**Figure 18.** Some of the current facilities around Redfish and Little Redfish lakes.  
 Source: File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson.

remained popular as well; stocking programs guaranteed that Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, and kokanee salmon were all available at the lake, and by the 1990s there were eight campgrounds to choose from: Chinook Bay, Little Redfish Lake, Mountain View, Point, Redfish Lake Outlet, Glacier View, Redfish Inlet, and Sockeye.<sup>110</sup> But as a 1998 environmental assessment concluded, “More and more people are utilizing the same amount of beachfront, trail, parking and water,” leading to overcrowding and causing damage to resources. By 1997, over 1.5 million people were coming to the SNRA, with Redfish Lake serving as the most heavily used site.<sup>111</sup>

One of the casualties of this development was the sockeye salmon. After the Second World War, heavy fishing at Redfish Lake and construction of a series of dams on the Snake River caused a startling demise in the sockeye population. In 1947, District Forester Arthur H. Berry reported that “the opening of the lower end of Redfish Lake to fishing, was a mistake.” Fishermen in “parked boats,” Berry explained, took too many fish. He therefore recommended closing the lower end of the lake to fishing, and prohibiting all boat fishing on the waterway. “These lakes are all such small size,” he related, “that the fish have some chance so long as fishing is restricted to the banks.”<sup>112</sup> Berry also proposed closing the area at the mouth of Fishhook Creek, as he had observed “as many as ten boats . . . anchored there at one time.”<sup>113</sup> But although some game wardens and fishermen agreed with his suggestions, no one took the necessary measures and the fish population continued to decline.<sup>114</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed several dams on the Lower Snake River in the 1960s, after which sockeye numbers

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<sup>110</sup> Quotation in “Redfish Lake Lodge,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0325; see also “Lease, Mystic Saddle Ranch,” July 15, 1985, *ibid.*, Document No. 0361; Henry S. Lee, Assistant Superintendent/Recreation to Allan W. Ashton, Superintendent, September 16, 1985, *ibid.*, Document No. 0397; “Camping—Sawtooth National Forest Maintains a Huge Range of Campground Choices, *The Twin Falls Times-News*, February 17, 2003, <http://www.magicvalley.com/entertainment/travel/IDestFull.asp?StoryID=29>, Document No. 0454. A 1956 inspection report stated that the Forest Service “leased” the Redfish Lake campground to D. Hunt during the summer. “Forest Supervisor—12/10/56,” p. 13.

<sup>111</sup> “Redfish Lake Lodge Permit Reissuance Environmental Assessment,” n.p. In 1993, according to Paul Ries, Area Ranger, the SNRA “converted the operation and maintenance of its campgrounds, picnic areas and day use areas to a concessionaire. . . . As part of this agreement the concessionaire collects fees which are used for the operation and maintenance of our facilities.” Paul Ries, Area Ranger, to Idaho State Parks and Recreation, February 24, 1994, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0395.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur H. Berry to Forest Supervisor, December 2, 1947, Folder W Management Reports Annual 1947, Box 095-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0429.

<sup>113</sup> Arthur H. Berry, District Forest Ranger, to Forest Supervisor, December 3, 1942, Folder W Management Reports 1942, Box 095-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0434.

<sup>114</sup> Arthur H. Berry, District Ranger, to Forest Supervisor, December 7, 1943, Folder W Management Reports 1942, Box 095-82-0220 (6837), RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0433.

dwindled further. In order to maintain an accurate count of spawning sockeye, the Forest Service issued a special use permit to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1955 to construct a counting weir and cabin on Redfish Lake Creek in the vicinity of the old CCC camp.<sup>115</sup> In its first year of operation, the weir counted 4,361 sockeye traveling to the lake. By 1981, another weir reported only 211 sockeye, and in 1989 a mere two. The condition worsened in the 1990s, as the Idaho Fish and Game Department spotted none in 1990 and only one in 1992. Fish and Game continued to plant fish in the lake and breed thousands of sockeye in captivity in hopes of increasing their numbers, but poor spawning rates continued.<sup>116</sup> At the same time, the Forest Service closed portions of the Redfish Lake shoreline by the popular Sockeye Campground, where heavy erosion had dumped large amounts of soil onto sockeye spawning beds. Many residents were upset with the Service's actions, while others, such as the Idaho Conservation League, believed that more had to be done to help the fish.<sup>117</sup>

## **1.2 CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE STATE OVER NAVIGABILITY**

With heavy recreational use and the decline of the sockeye occurring at Redfish Lake in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, questions arose about whether the State of Idaho or the federal government had jurisdiction over the lake and its waters, and whether the state, the county, or the Forest Service was the proper permitting agency for operations on the lake. In the early 1900s, the Idaho Supreme Court had issued a decision in *Idaho Northern Railroad Company, Reapt., v. Post Falls Lumber and Manufacturing Company, Appt.*, affirming that “any stream in this state is

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<sup>115</sup> “Special Use Permit, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Counting Weir and Cabin, 3-23-55,” Folder 2710 Special Use Permit U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dam and Weir, 3/25/55, closed 2/15/66, Box 8, Sawtooth National Forest Special Use Permit, ca. 1909-1978, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0439.

<sup>116</sup> “Snake River Sockeye Identified as Endangered,” *Journal Newspapers*, April 10, 1991, copy in File RM-029—Wildlife Fish, Filing Cabinet RM-029, RHD, KCL, Document No. 0090; “ICL Petitions to Save Idaho Sockeye Salmon,” *Journal Newspapers*, May 22, 1991, *ibid.*, Document No. 0091; “Redfish Lake Weir Taken Down for the Winter,” *Mountain Express*, October 28, 1992, *ibid.*, Document No. 0092. For more information on Fish and Game’s efforts to save the sockeye, see Keith A. Johnson, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, *Research and Recovery of Snake River Sockeye Salmon, Annual Report 1992 to Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, OR, Contract 91-BI-21065, Project 91-72* (BPA Report DOE/BP-21065-1), <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/Environment/EW/EWP/DOCS/REPORTS/HATCHERY/A21065-1.pdf>, Document No. 0457.

<sup>117</sup> “Forest Service Mends Wound Created by Redfish Lake Fence,” *Mountain Express*, June 9, 1993, copy in File RM-069 Forest Service/SNRA Management/Policy, Filing Cabinet RM-069, RHD, KCL, Document No. 0088; “Redfish Lake Shoreline to Be Partially Closed, SNRA Says,” *Mountain Express*, May 26, 1993, *ibid.*, Document No. 0093.

navigable on which logs or timber can be floated to market or the place of use.”<sup>118</sup> In a Preliminary Development and Management Plan for the SNRA prepared in the 1960s, the Forest Service indicated that it assumed that streams crossing private lands within the SNRA were “non-navigable, and that adjacent land owners own the stream beds.”<sup>119</sup> Whether the Service considered “streams” to mean “lakes” is unclear, but there is no record of a State of Idaho complaint about this assumption. The first indication of a dispute arose in the 1970s when the state and the Forest Service debated whether the Salmon River was navigable, and if so, who had authority to issue special use permits on the river. At the time, the Service declared that “the Main Salmon River is considered to be nonnavigable, because no Federal Court decision has dictated otherwise,” meaning that the Forest Service would continue to issue and administer “special-use permits covering commercial outfitting operations on that portion of the river within the National Forest boundaries.”<sup>120</sup> Since Redfish Lake was part of the headwaters of the Salmon River, it was only a matter of time before the dispute extended to that body as well.

In 1983, Forest Service officials met with the Custer County Waterways Committee and Jim Poulsen of the Idaho Parks and Recreation division to discuss jurisdiction over Redfish Lake’s water surface. Poulsen stated that Idaho boating laws were the responsibility of the state, prompting the question of whether that meant that the state also had the duty of lake use management and planning. After some discussion, the group agreed that it was the joint responsibility of the Forest Service, the state, and the county.<sup>121</sup> But in 1986, the state asserted its complete jurisdiction over the lake in a memorandum entitled “Navigable Waters of Idaho,” which listed Redfish and Little Redfish as navigable for state title and right of way purposes.<sup>122</sup> This designation was reinforced in 1989 when Fred A. Kisabeth, Assistant Director of Lands,

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<sup>118</sup> Typescript, Idaho Supreme Court, *Idaho Northern Railroad Company, Reapt., vs. Post Falls Lumber & Manufacturing Company, Appt.*, File S—Supervision—Legal Decisions, 1909-1917, Box 601106, RG 95, Accession No. 095-60A-0192, FRC, Document No. 0492.

<sup>119</sup> Untitled document, p. 3, Folder 2370 Other Areas: Preliminary Development and Management Plan: Proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Box 3, Sawtooth National Forest Wilderness and Primitive Areas, ca. 1936-1971, RG 95, NARA-PAR, Document No. 0437.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum to Forest Supervisor, Salmon N.F., April 1, 1978, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0334.

<sup>121</sup> Redfish Lake Management Coordination with Custer County Waterways Committee, November 4, 1983, File 2350 General Forest Environment Areas Under Redfish Lake Shoreline and Surface Management, Stanley Ranger Station, Stanley, Idaho, Document No. 0183.

<sup>122</sup> Stanley F. Hamilton, Director, State of Idaho Department of Lands, Operations Memorandum Number 1700, “Navigable Waters in Idaho,” May 13, 1986, File Redfish Boat Ramps Cost Share Co-op Agreement II 6/96-9/30/96, Stanley Ranger Station, Stanley, Idaho, Document No. 0186.

Minerals and Range Management in the Department of Lands, explained that the only reason why the state had not assumed the regulation of Redfish Lake was because it had “not extended administration of the [Lake Protection] Act to navigable lakes and reservoirs where the jurisdiction is asserted and exclusively assumed by a federal agency.” Kisabeth also proclaimed the state’s desire to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Forest Service to define the state’s regulatory duties and proprietary interests.<sup>123</sup>

However, not until the mid-1990s did serious discussions about an MOU occur. In 1997, Howard K. Kestie, Area Supervisor for Idaho Department of Lands, composed a draft MOU which divided management responsibilities between the three entities: the Forest Service would “manage the upland resources, Red Fish Lake Lodge facility and control access to Red Fish Lake”; the state would “manage and regulate Red Fish Lake bed, boat docks, boat ramps, and boat marinas”; and the county would “manage the water surface and regulate navigation, enforce boat use, boat laws, provide maintenance and improvement of waterways.”<sup>124</sup> But three years later, the different sides still had not agreed to the MOU. Tom M. Streit, recreation manager for the SNRA, indicated that because no official determination of navigability had been made, the Forest Service did not believe that the state or county had jurisdiction over the beds and water surfaces of Redfish Lake, Little Redfish Lake, or Stanley Lake.<sup>125</sup> The main problem was not the delineation of responsibilities, but the state’s use of language implying its jurisdiction. Despite Forest Service objections, for example, MOU drafts continued to say that the county would manage “water surfaces of Lakes” rather than “public use located on” lakes, and the state continued to insist that both it and the federal government had “trust” responsibilities over the waterway.<sup>126</sup> Following several months of negotiations, Streit finally recommended that all

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<sup>123</sup> Fred A. Kisabeth, Assistant Director, Lands, Minerals and Range Mgt., to David Hoefer, Environmental Coordinator, Intermountain Region, U.S. Forest Service, January 26, 1989, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0336.

<sup>124</sup> Quotations in “Memorandum of Understanding Between State of Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and United States Department of Agriculture USDA—Forest Service (FS) and Custer County Commissioners Custer County Waterways Committee (CCWC),” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0363; see also Kestie to Steven L. Thorsen, ABC Agra-LLC, September 29, 1997, *ibid.*, Document No. 0365. The Forest Service’s comments on this draft could not be found.

<sup>125</sup> Marginalia on “Memorandum of Understanding Between Idaho Department of Lands and Custer County and the United State Department of Agriculture Forest Service Sawtooth National Forest,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0367.

<sup>126</sup> See “Memorandum of Understanding, No. 14-MOU-99 between Idaho Department of Lands and Custer County and the United State Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Sawtooth National Forest,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0366.

MOU efforts be discontinued. “The Forest Service has not made a consistent showing on the management of the lakes,” he argued in justification. “I’m not sure that [Idaho Department of Lands] has any valid role to play, and Custer County officials seem to be at odds regarding who or if they want to participate at all.” No MOU was ever approved, although all sides implicitly agreed that each entity would assume the management responsibilities outlined in the MOU.<sup>127</sup>

As MOU discussions occurred, general debate over the navigability of Redfish Lake continued. When various permits for Redfish Lake Lodge came up for renewal in the 1990s, including one allowing operation of the marina, the county and the Forest Service disagreed over who was the proper permitting entity. Allen Getty, a commissioner for Custer County, informed the Forest Service in 1995 that he was “under the assumption that the County has lake surface authority,” meaning that either the Forest Service or Redfish Lake Lodge needed county permission to allow the mooring of boats.<sup>128</sup> Steve Rinella of the Forest Service agreed that “based on blessing from the State of Idaho 15 years ago, within their jurisdiction, we permitted the docks and moorings on the lake,” but he also recognized that “while the state has asserted jurisdiction on the lake, it has not been decreed.”<sup>129</sup> However, in a meeting between Forest Service and county officials in March 1996, the participants declared that “jurisdiction below the high water line belongs to the county (as an entity of the state).” In addition, according to the minutes of a similar meeting in September 1996, Paul Ries, Area Ranger for the Forest Service, said that “the state is manager of the lake due to ownership[;] the land board owns submerged land.” Because the state had claimed that Redfish Lake was navigable, Ries continued, the Service would “apply for all needed permits” for its operations, with the qualification that if the state denied permits, the Service might “assert Federal Jurisdiction where it is debatable.”<sup>130</sup> Finally, a 1997 fee

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<sup>127</sup> Quotation in Tom Streit email to Deborah B. Cooper, January 12, 2001, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0370; see also Deborah DesLaurier to Idaho Department of Lands, April 20, 1999, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0384.

<sup>128</sup> Steve Lipus Notes from Telephone Conversation with Allen Getty, December 6, 1995, attachment to Steve Rinella email to A. Nelson, March 28, 1997, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0394.

<sup>129</sup> Steve Rinella email to A. Nelson, March 28, 1997, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0394.

<sup>130</sup> First quotation in “Summary of the March 27, 1996 Meeting on Redfish Lake Management,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0391; other quotations in “Minutes Waterways Meeting 9/18/96,” *ibid.*, Document No. 0390.

collection agreement between Custer County and the Forest Service stated that “jurisdiction below the high water line belongs to the County (as an entity of the state).”<sup>131</sup>

Although Forest Service officials recognized county and state management of the lake, they still insisted that the state could not assert jurisdiction until an official determination of navigability had occurred. Steve Rinella, for example, claimed in 1998 that “the federal government position is that until navigability is established under Federal doctrine, it isn’t recognized. . . . We have affirmed this position with the State and County.”<sup>132</sup> Likewise, Deborah DesLaurier, Area Ranger, told the Idaho Department of Lands that although she was “aware of the decree made previously for Redfish through a state of Idaho case,” the Forest Service would not “recognize jurisdiction of navigable waters by the State, unless they had been decreed through federal doctrine and process.” DesLaurier believed that the Service, the state, and the county could divide management responsibilities at the lake “without discussing jurisdictions.” She had no problem with the state assuming permitting activities for docks as long as the state realized that this was an administrative duty and not a right established by jurisdiction.<sup>133</sup>

But confusion still existed, especially among those operating Redfish Lake Lodge. When John K. Teaford, who had an interest in the lodge for a brief period in the 1990s,<sup>134</sup> tried to get a renewal of his special use permit in 1997, he castigated the Service for attempting to regulate docks on a water surface not under its authority. “Administrative authority over the waters of Redfish Lake (and all navigable waterways within Custer County),” he claimed, “is under the jurisdiction of the State of Idaho.”<sup>135</sup> The Crouch family, who bought the lodge from Teaford in 1999, agreed with his position. In 2001 they made plans to replace the lodge’s 50-year-old dock, and became upset when the SNRA required its own approval of architectural drawings. “Our

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<sup>131</sup> “Collection Agreement No. 14-CC-97-013 Between Custer County Custer County Waterways Committee and United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Sawtooth National Forest,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0402.

<sup>132</sup> Steve Rinella email to D4 Staff, February 18, 1998, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0374.

<sup>133</sup> DesLaurier to Idaho Department of Lands, April 20, 1999. It is unclear exactly what the decree is to which she is referring.

<sup>134</sup> See “Draft #2 Collection Agreement, No. XX-XX-97-XXX between John K. Teaford and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Sawtooth National Recreation Area Sawtooth National Forest,” File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0368.

<sup>135</sup> John K. Teaford and Peter A. Staddler to Mr. Tom Bandolin, Sawtooth National Forest, July 23, 1997, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0312.

special use permit and the biological assessment for the special use permit,” Arlen Crouch wrote, “states many times that the dock is under the authority of the State of Idaho.”<sup>136</sup> Area Ranger Debora Cooper (formerly DesLaurier) responded that the Forest Service allowed the state “to assume authority for the dock,” but until the courts had made a formal decision over Redfish Lake’s navigability, “the dock is under federal jurisdiction and permitted as such.”<sup>137</sup> Jack See, manager of the lodge in the early 1990s, expressed similar opinions. “The State has claimed title, but it is unclear to me if this has been adjudicated in the courts,” he related in 1997. “The State has not formalized its ownership interest of Redfish Lake[, while] . . . the Forest Service has not yet asserted its federal jurisdiction.”<sup>138</sup> As the twenty-first century dawned, a resolution to these issues was not forthcoming, and the debate over navigability and jurisdiction continued.

### 1.3 CONCLUSION

Although questions of jurisdiction over Redfish Lake’s bed and banks remain controversial, the historical record clearly shows that since the late 1800s, people have used Redfish Lake and its shores for both economic and recreational functions (Appendix A). By the 1880s, residents of the Sawtooth and Wood River Valleys regarded the lake as a prime location for camping and fishing, and numerous individuals made summer trips to the waterbody. At the same time, some were extracting fish from the lake and selling them to hotels and restaurants in Ketchum and Boise, although reports did not clearly indicate whether these fishermen made their catches from the shore or from boats. Photographs and documents from the 1880s and 1890s show boat use on Redfish waters, but whether people rented the vessels or paid for these excursions is undocumented. As recreational use continued into the 1900s, some efforts were made to homestead and graze land around the lake under Forest Service authorization. The Service did not issue any grazing permits on the lake’s shores, but at least one rancher grazed his sheep around Fishhook Creek, and animals along a stock driveway sometimes strayed from the trail onto the shores of Redfish and Little Redfish Lakes. Homesteaders generally found the land

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<sup>136</sup> Arlen B. Crouch to Debora Cooper, SNRA Area Ranger, February 20, 2001, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0322.

<sup>137</sup> Debora Cooper, Area Ranger, to Redfish Lake Lodge, Arlen B. Crouch, May 22, 2001, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0323.

<sup>138</sup> Jack See, Manager, to Stanley Hamilton, Director, Idaho Department of Lands, April 3, 1997, File FOIA 1212-02, file provided by Melanie Peterson, Document No. 0383.

around Redfish to be unproductive, leading Dick Horstman and Robert Limbert to pursue monetary gain through the development of resorts and boat rental operations in the 1920s. After Limbert established Redfish Lake Lodge, recreation use increased, spurred on by Forest Service development of campgrounds and trails and the establishment of numerous private outfitting and guide operations. The major recreational boom, however, did not occur until the 1960s, when the Forest Service and operators of Redfish Lake Lodge developed major camping, fishing, and boating facilities at Redfish Lake. After the creation of the SNRA in 1972, visitation to the region skyrocketed, leading to concerns about overcrowding, the spawning sockeye salmon population, and jurisdiction over the lake. These questions plagued the Forest Service, Custer County, and the State of Idaho, but Redfish Lake remained a popular recreation spot. As one publication concluded, “sportsmen, water enthusiasts, hikers, mountain bikers, climbers, photographers, and nature lovers [could] discover all that the great outdoors offers” at Redfish Lake.<sup>139</sup> These uses would continue in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>139</sup> Redfish Lake Lodge, “Summer in Idaho!” <http://www.redfishlake.com/Welcome%20to%20Redfish.htm>, Document No. 0455.

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## APPENDIX A

### CHRONOLOGY FOR RED FISH LAKE AND VICINITY

1824-1833      Alexander Ross, Warren Ferris, John Work, and Captain Bonneville explore what will later be known as Stanley Basin

1863              Idaho organized as a territory

1864              Captain Stanley, with Frank Coffin, visits and names Stanley Basin

1864-1867        J. Marion More visits several Sawtooth Mountain lakes

1870s-1880s      Mining boom in Sawtooth and Wood River Valleys

1880              *The Yankee Herald* reports that Alturas Lake is navigated

1880 or 1881      Wagon road constructed to Redfish Lake

1880s              Redfish Lake becomes known as a popular recreation area

1883              Mrs. Broadhead takes a boat out on Redfish Lake

1885              Report of fish from Redfish Lake being sold at restaurants and hotels in Ketchum

1887              Frank Gooding brings first large bands of sheep into Stanley Basin

1890              Idaho achieves statehood

1902              Interior Department temporarily withdraws land for the creation of the Sawtooth Forest Reserve

1905              Sawtooth Forest Reserve officially created

1905-1930        Homesteaders settle the Stanley Basin

1907              Sawtooth Forest Reserve changed to Sawtooth National Forest

1911-1913        First discussions about a Sawtooth National Park

1913              Bill Wooley homesteads land at Redfish Lake

1913-1924        Horstman constructs a hotel at the northern end of Redfish Lake

1910s-1920s Forest Service makes numerous improvements at Redfish Lake, including the construction of trails, telephone lines, campgrounds, and roads

1918-1922 Dave Williams begins first guide operations

1919 A. H. Brailsford grazes sheep around Fishhook Creek

1920 Cooperative fish stocking program for Redfish Lake begins

1927-1929 Robert Limbert renovates Horstman's hotel, naming it Redfish LakeLodge. As part of the renovation, he floats logs across the lake

1928 Little Redfish Lake and Redfish Lake Creek added to Sawtooth National Forest

1930 Redfish Lake Lodge begins operations, providing guided hunting and fishing trips and boat rentals to tourists

1933, 1937-1940 CCC camp at Redfish Lake constructs bridges, roads, campgrounds, and telephone lines

1937 Land withdrawn by Secretary of the Interior for reclamation withdrawal

1941-1945 Second World War

1940s Ranger Arthur Berry recommends that boat fishing be eliminated from Redfish Lake

1958-1968 Recreation development begins in earnest at Redfish Lake

1972 Creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area

1972 Reclamation withdrawal rescinded

1976 Forest Service states that no determination of navigability for title has been made over the Salmon River

1983 Forest Service, county, and state meet to discuss jurisdiction of Redfish Lake

1986 Idaho Department of Lands issues Operations Memorandum No. 1700 saying that it considers Redfish Lake navigable

1980s-1990s Drastic decline in number of spawning sockeye salmon

1990s-present State, county, and Forest Service dispute jurisdiction over Redfish Lake, including the authority to issue marina and dock permits